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THE
MAKING
OF THE
BIBLE
BY
A.E. DUNNING



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THE MAKING OF THE BIBLE

THE LAW

THE PROPHETS

THE WRITINGS

THE MAKING OF THE BIBLE

BY
ALBERT E. DUNNING, D.D.



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No. 1.

FOREWORD

THIS volume is a primer of introduction to the study of the books of the Old Testament. It is prepared as a textbook for teachers and students of adult Bible Classes.

Its method is a result of several years' experience in teaching. The whole Bible — sixty-six books — is first taken up. The twenty-seven books of the New Covenant are shown by themselves in the volume with which all Christians are familiar. Then the books of the Old Covenant in the latest collection are studied by themselves as a volume. The second collection is next studied in the same way, and finally the earliest collection, the nucleus of the Sacred Library. Important advantages are gained by this method in meeting prejudices and familiarizing the students with processes essential to the formation and growth of a library.

The Bible must be constantly in hand in this study, and allowed to speak for itself; otherwise this volume will prove of small value. The Scripture references are placed in the text rather than in foot notes because they are an essential part of the study.

The American Standard Revision is earnestly recommended. The references will not always

be found intelligible if the King James Version only is used.

Teachers will find maps of the ancient world and some knowledge of Hebrew and cognate history almost indispensable.

It is intended that portions at least of each book of the Bible be read in connection with the chapter explaining it.

The word "lesson" is not used as a title, because a single chapter will often require more than the time of one lesson when students are unfamiliar with ancient history.

Instead of the common method in text books of using questions and answers, the insets will be found suggestive of questions and the corresponding italicized words may suggest answers. But it is desired that teachers should make the questions for their classes.

The treatment of different books has been varied for two reasons: to avoid monotony in taking up the study of so many books one after another, and to suggest different ways of study.

Nothing new is offered in these chapters. The substance of what is here presented has been known and generally accepted by Biblical scholars for a generation or more. The attempt is here made to put that knowledge into shape for convenient use by teachers and to facilitate intelligent reading of the Old Testament.

Solutions of problems concerning the Hebrew Scriptures now generally accepted are here adopted without any attempt to give the history of their solution. Problems not conclusively solved are not mentioned.

Some dates and other matters to which reference was necessary are uncertain. In such cases what seemed the most probable statements were chosen without taking space to explain reasons for the choice. Whenever questions arise to which satisfactory answers are not found here, they should lead to further study, not mere acceptance of the opinions of others. On the last pages are given books for study, of which the dictionaries of the Bible are most important after the Bible itself.

Each of these three Parts is complete in itself, and may be used as a separate textbook.

A considerable number of these chapters have been taught in the Bible class for men and women in the Old South Church, Boston, Mass., and I am much indebted to its members for their co-operation in the study which has issued in this volume, which I earnestly hope may guide many into larger knowledge and greater certainty of the Truth which is the Life.

ALBERT E. DUNNING.

BOSTON, August, 1911.

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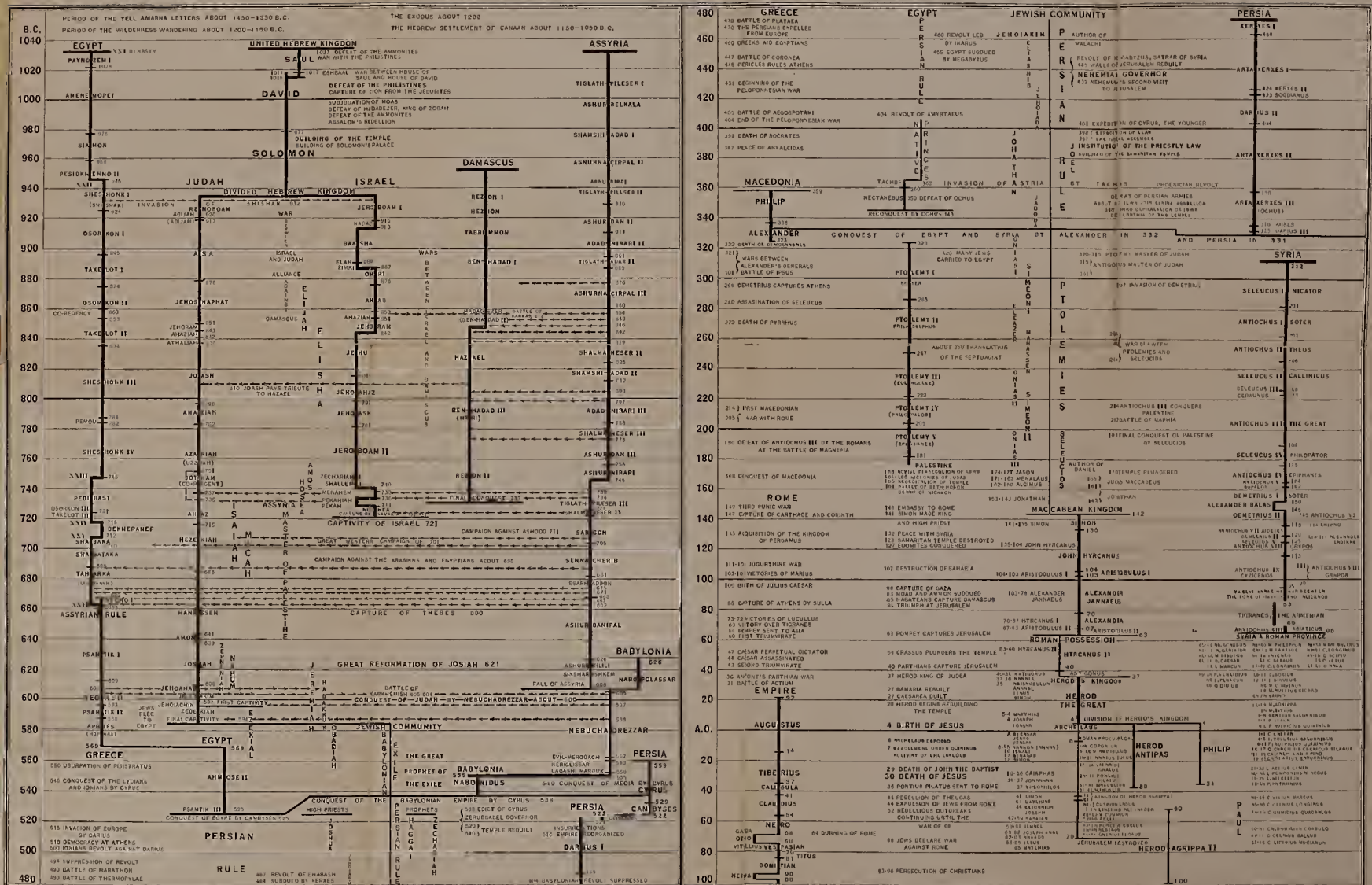
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PART ONE
THE WRITINGS







MAKING OF THE BIBLE

I

THE BOOKS OF THE COVENANT

THE Bible, as a title describing the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, first came into use in the fourteenth century of the Christian era. It comes from the Greek word *byblos*, the name of the papyrus plant whose leaves were used to write upon. In the singular number the word was *byblion*, a roll or book, Luke 4:17. In early times the neuter plural, *byblia*, described the entire collection of sixty-six books, but in the middle ages this word was mistaken for a feminine singular, hence our title, The Bible.

The Book of the Covenant was the earliest name given by the Hebrews to their sacred writings, Ex. 24:7, 8. Jehovah, their God, gave them through Moses certain laws, "statutes and commandments," Deut. 6:17, and the people promised to obey them, Ex. 24:3. On their promise to obey, Jehovah promised to regard them as his own peculiar people, Ex. 19:5, 6. This mutual agree-

ment was called a Covenant between Jehovah and the Hebrews. The writings containing these commandments, the promises of the people to keep them, the blessings promised to those who kept them, and punishments threatened to those who disobeyed them, came to be called *the books of the Covenant*.

The History of the Covenant is the first object of study in learning how the Bible began and how it grew. It was at first a Covenant *with The First* *individuals*. Examples are Noah, Gen. *Object of* *Study* 6:18; 9:8-17. Abraham, Gen. 13:14-17:15:18; 17:2-4. Isaac, Gen. 17:19; 26:2-5, 24, 25. Jacob, Gen. 28:2-4; Ex. 32:13. But when the Hebrews became a people, the Covenant made with their fathers came to be *with the nation*. It was the national Covenant which led to the making of the Hebrew Scriptures. Read Ex. 6:2-8; 19:3-6; 20:22-24:8; 34:10-27; Deut. 5:1-22. Study next,

1. *The Institutions related to the Covenant*: circumcision, Gen. 17:7-14. The book, the altar, Ex. 24:3-8; 34:27, 28; 2 Kings 23:2, 3. The Sabbath, Ex. 31:12-18. The priesthood, Num. 25:12, 13. The ark, Josh. 3:6, 14-17. The tabernacle, Ex. 30:43-46. The temple, 1 Kings 8:21-26. The primitive religious institutions of the Hebrews were a holy day, a holy house, and a holy book.

2. *The sacredness of words relating to the Covenant*, Deut. 6:4-9; 29:1, 10-14. Blessings promised to those who keep it, Deut. 28:1-14; 30:9, 10; Ps. 103:17, 18. Curses pronounced on those who break it, Deut. 28:15-68; 30:17-20.

3. *The value of the Covenant*, Ps. 25:10, 14; 89:1-4; 111:5, 6.

4. *The love of the people for the books of the Covenant*, Ps. 19:7-14; 40:8-10, Ps. 119.

The New Covenant was foreshadowed when the Hebrew nation declined, as an inward personal relation with God in the place of a national covenant, Jer. 31:31-34. In fulfilment of prophecy it was made between God and believers in him through Jesus Christ his Son, and sealed by his sacrifice of himself on the cross, Matt. 26:26-28; Luke 22:20. The New Covenant grew out of and in process of time superseded the Old, Heb. 8:6-13. The Christian Scriptures are the books of the New Covenant.

The Latin translation of the Greek word meaning Covenant is *testamentum*. The Hebrew and Christian Scriptures began to be called the Old and New Testaments in the second century of our era. Our study at present is confined to the Hebrew Scriptures.

The selection of books as sacred out of the literature of the Hebrews was determined by *their relation to the Covenant between God and his*

chosen people. The Covenant was the cornerstone of the Hebrew nation, and chosen books concerning it were their Holy Scriptures. We Christians call them the Old Testament, or better, The Old Covenant.

II

THE LIBRARY OF THE COVENANT

THE books in the Hebrew sacred library in its present form are thirty-nine. They include *many* *forms of literature*; history, biography, *The Completed Collection* essay; drama, poem, song; story, sermon, apocalypse. Give examples of each.

Most of these books are composed of various *documents written at different times*. Examples are the Psalms, collected into books long after they were written as individual psalms; the Proverbs; and the abstracts of sermons and addresses brought together in the books of the prophets.

Many of these books and of the documents included in them were *written by persons unknown* to us.

They treat of *a great variety of subjects*: of life and death, of men's being, secret thoughts and feelings; their relations with one another in the home, in business, in society, in government; their feelings toward God and his disposition

toward them; of nature, art and science; the past, present and future.

Yet they all have *a wonderful unity*, which consists in the relation of each and all these books to the Covenant. They have one controlling theme — the making of the Covenant and its restoration for those who have broken it; one supreme personality — the Covenant-keeping God and the Redeemer of his people; and one prevailing exhortation — to enter into this Covenant and keep it.

Authors write books. Editors revise, enlarge and combine the writings of others. Collectors gather into a library books which treat
 The Library in the Making of the subject or subjects in which they are interested. Libraries of great permanent value are enriched from time to time as new books are added furnishing further knowledge of the subjects which caused the libraries to be formed.

Each book in this library of the Covenant represents the purpose of its author. But the thirty-nine books together represent the purpose of their collectors to present in a library *the nature and history of the Covenant* between Jehovah and his people Israel.

The books of the New Testament, *i.e.* the New Covenant, are possessed by Christian students of the Bible in a volume by themselves. But

the library of the Old Testament includes three as distinct collections, made and adopted as Holy The Scriptures in different periods of Hebrew Successive history. Jesus mentioned the three col- Collections lections, Luke 24:44. He often spoke of the first two, Matt. 5:17, 7:12; 22:40. The three are often referred to in Jewish literature. We name them here in the order in which we shall study them in this course.

The latest library, called *Kethubim* in Hebrew, "The Writings," and *Hagiographa* in Greek, The "The Sacred Writings"; eleven books. Writings They are (1) The chief books of poetry — The Psalms, Proverbs, Job; (2) The five Rolls — Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther; (3) The historical books — Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah, Daniel.

The second library, called in Hebrew, *Nebiim* "The Prophets"; eight books. (1) The former The prophets — Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Prophets Kings; (2) The latter prophets — Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the minor prophets. These are twelve in one book — Amos, Hosea, Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Obadiah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Joel, Jonah.

The earliest collection, called in Hebrew, The Law *Torah* "The Law"; five books — Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

Jerome, who translated the Bible into Latin, the Vulgate, and lived 340-420 A.D., thus described the entire collection:

“All Holy Scripture is divided into three successive parts: Law, Prophets, Hagiographa; that is, in five, in eight, and in eleven books.”

III

THE PSALMS

THE hymn-book of the Jewish Church from the time of the second temple was a collection of the Psalms now included in our Bible. In the time of our Lord the collection had been growing for several hundred years. Luke 20:42; 24:44; Acts 1:20.

The title is from the Greek word *psalmoi*, meaning poems sung to the music of a lyre or other stringed instruments, *lyric* poetry.

Five collections are gathered into one, as follows:

Book I. 1-41. Psalms 1 and 2 are introductory to the whole 150. The remainder with two exceptions are ascribed to David. See successive titles.

Book II. 42-72. The first eight are ascribed to a guild of singers, "the sons of Korah," most of the others to David. Ps. 72:20 indicates that those attributed to David were completed in this collection.

Book III. 73-89. The first ten are ascribed

to the guild of Asaph, four to the sons of Korah, one each to David, Heman, and Ethan.

Book IV. 90-106. Mostly songs of praise and thanksgiving.

Book V. 107-150. Several small collections in one. For example, Hallelujah songs 113-118; Pilgrim songs 120-134.

Each book ends with a doxology, 41:13; 72:18, 19; 89:52; 106:48. Psalm 150 is a doxology appended to the entire collection.

In the American Standard and many other editions titles by English editors have been prefixed to the Psalms explaining their meanings. For example, Psalm 2, "A morning prayer of trust in God." Psalm 3, "An evening prayer of trust in God." Other headings are translations from the Hebrew, prefixed by Jewish collectors and editors. Some are attempts to fix the authorship and the occasion of composition, as Psalm 3, "A Psalm of David when he fled from Absalom his son." See Psalms 7, 18, 34. These headings are probably guesses. Psalm 30 is described as "a song at the dedication of the House, a Psalm of David." The "house" referred to is evidently the temple, which was not begun till after the death of David. A "song" is a common title, 46, 48, 65-68, 75. "A love song" is the title of 45. "A prayer," 17, 86, 90.

The words, "for the chief musician," may have

been taken from the precentor's copy used in the temple service. The names of tunes are left untranslated, and the meaning of some of them is uncertain. Others may be rendered "Hind of the Dawn," 22, "Destroy Not," 57-59, 75, a tune for a vintage song, Isa. 65: 8, "Silent dove in far off lands," 56, "Lilies," 45, "Lilies, a Testimony," 80. Other titles describe the form or character of the poem, the instruments played in accompaniment, male or female voices, etc.

Popular songs were repeated in successive collections, with variations. Psalm 14 of Book I appears again in Book II, as Psalm 53. The last five verses of Psalm 40 in Book I are made a complete Psalm, 70 in Book II. Parts of Psalm 57, vs. 7-11, and Psalm 60, vs. 5-12 in Book II are combined to make Psalm 108 in Book V.

Comparison with modern hymn-books will help much in understanding the Psalms. Note how hymns have been altered to fit tunes, how stanzas by different authors have been combined, and how expressions in them have been changed to adapt them to different conditions and modified beliefs. The hymns in the hymn-book of the Jews have passed through similar modifications.

The sources of the Psalms are found in the Books of the Law. Ps. 19:7-14. The synagogue service in which the Law books were read made

their counsels and commandments popular. Devout souls meditated on them and expressed their aspirations in songs. Hymns expressing personal experience were adapted to public use. All the people sang, and their songs were simple and natural — songs of solitude on the mountains, songs of gladness in harvest, complaints of sorrow over disappointment, dirges over the death of friends, praises for Jehovah's deliverances. The whole range of human emotions found expression in the sifted product of centuries of experience, personal and national. The underlying thought in the entire collection is *the Covenant relation between Jehovah and his people*. Psalms 25:10–14; 50:4, 5, 16, 17; 89:3, 28, 29, 34; 111:5, 9.

The Psalms are read more extensively than any other book in the world. In ages before printing, multitudes of Christians knew almost nothing of the Bible except the Psalms. The ritual of the Episcopal church provides that the Epistles shall be read twice in the public services of the year, the Gospels three times, and the Psalms twelve times.

The Psalms in private and public use came to minister to the spiritual needs and aspirations of the whole Hebrew people; and they are adapted to the use of all mankind. For *lyric* poetry is suited to the utterance of universal experience.

The inspiration of the Psalms was the life of God in the souls of men finding expression in **Their** their exalted spiritual conditions, and **Inspiration** in the spiritual conditions of the whole people, using their national traits and modes of thought as means for the communication of divine truth to men.

The Psalms are a collection of collections of hymns by many writers, in different periods of **Their** Hebrew history. They are of the kind **Authorship** attributed to the national hero whom the Hebrews regarded as their greatest poet — David, the sweet singer of Israel, and therefore they are known as *The Psalms of David*.

IV

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

THE wisdom teaching in the old Testament is a distinct class of literature. Three kinds of authors wrote the books of the Bible. The Wisdom Books The *priests* gave instruction, the *prophets* the word or message of God, the *sages* counsel, Jer. 18:18. Wisdom in its earlier forms consisted of sententious sayings, dealing with practical problems of human life. Wisdom on its divine side was an attribute of God in all his creative activities, Prov. 8:22-31.

The wisdom books are Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes. Of similar character are two apocryphal books, Ecclesiasticus and the Wisdom of Solomon.

The Proverbs are conclusions from the reflections and reasonings of Hebrew sages. They express the Hebrew nation's judgment of the way to success in life. They are the convictions of a people whose ruling principle was loyalty to Jehovah, the results of human experience through many generations.

The thesis of Proverbs is that *Wisdom is blessed-*

ness. The alphabet of wisdom is the fear of God, Prov. 9:10, and the avoidance of evil, 8:13.

The Subject This wisdom is the matter of greatest importance in life, 4:7. To gain it is the highest success, 8:11; to fail to get it is to lose everything, 8:36. This thesis expressed in axioms is in large part the book of Proverbs. Its sayings are practical wisdom applied to the common concerns of life. They are instructions which the simplest can understand, Isa. 35:8, as to *the way to keep the Covenant*.

The proverbs are expressed in *didactic* poetry, which belongs to the domain of reason, while lyric poetry is the expression of feeling and belongs to the domain of the emotions. The *main collection* is 10:1–22:16. Each couplet reiterates the same contrasted truths in varied forms: that wisdom is blessedness, folly is misery. Be good and you will prosper; be wicked and you will suffer. Read for comparison Deut. chapter 28. This collection is ascribed to Solomon in the title, 10:1.

An appendix to the main collection 22:17–24:22. vs. 17–21 are a letter introducing the teaching that follows. A sonnet on wine is included, 23:29–35.

A second appendix, 24:23–34, concludes with a word picture, vs. 33, 34, repeated in the later general introduction to the book, 6:10, 11.

The *second collection* is ascribed to men of King Hezekiah's court, about 250 years after the time of Solomon, chapters 25-29.

Three short collections: (a) prayer of Agur, chapter 30; (b) teachings of King Lemuel's mother, 31:1-9; (c) acrostic poem on a Worthy Woman, 31:10-31.

An original introduction to the collections as a whole, chapters 1-9, is in nobler style than the remainder of the book.

A study in detail of the book of Proverbs may be briefly suggested. Ch. 1:1-6 is the general title of the whole book; 1:7 is the thesis; 1:8, 9 is an introduction; 1:10-19 is a sonnet on Evil Company, the first line of v. 10 being expanded in vs. 11-14, while the second line is expanded in vs. 15, 16.

Taking 18:22 for a general statement on *the value of a wife*, note the qualification of it in 19:14, and further modifications in 21:9 (repeated in 25:24), 21:19 and 30:23.

For a study of *the sluggard* consider 13:4; 22:13 (compare the better form 26:13), and the poems, 6:6-11; 26:13-16.

Fools are described in 10:1 (repeated 15:20) 17:21, 24, 25, and 26:1-12.

Note terse descriptions in chapter 26 of the *meddler*, vs. 17, the *practical* joker, vs. 18, 19,

the *slanderer*, v. 20, the *quarrelsome person*, v. 21, and the *hypocrite*, vs. 22-28.

Riddles are propounded and answered 30: 15-33, *e.g.* v. 18 is the riddle, v. 19 the answer.

The book of Proverbs is a collection of collections of *Sayings of Sages* in many generations.

Author-ship They are of the type of those attributed to the national hero whom the Hebrews regarded as the greatest of their sages, hence they are called the *Proverbs of Solomon*.

V

THE BOOK OF JOB

THE thesis of the book of Proverbs is that *wisdom is blessedness*. The popular interpretation of its Theme it was that those who obey God will prosper and be happy, while those who disobey him will have disasters and be miserable. This is also the theme of the first Psalm.

The book of Job is *a challenge to this thesis*. Admitting the general principle of the Hebrew teaching that only the righteous receive the approval of God, Deut. 28:1-14, Ps. 37:35-40, Job 5:3-7, it faces the fact that righteous persons often suffer the severest adversity. This book asks how a righteous God can inflict such suffering on righteous men, Job 10:1-7, and suggests without dogmatically stating the answer, Job 40:1-5; 42:1-6.

Job is a dramatic poem. It may be compared with Shakespeare's King Lear. The prologue or first act includes five scenes; (1) a picture of the oriental family of Job, 1:1-5; (2) a scene in heaven, where the Satan or Adversary, also a son of God, 1:6, ac-

cuses Job before God, 1:6-12; (3) a picture of Job's trials, 1:13-22; (4) a new challenge of Job by the Satan, 2:1-6; (5) Job enduring the test, 2:7-10.

The second act presents three cycles of speeches between Job and his friends, chapters 3-27. He and they all belong to the guild of Sages or Wise Men. Job is *the heretic of his time*. He maintains his innocence, and this is at the outset admitted, 1:8. Yet the calamities that have overtaken him are evident and extreme.

Three great orthodox teachers from three countries attempt to prove him wrong, 2:11. Job opens the discussion by lamenting that he was born, 3:1-10, that he did not die as soon as born, 3:11-19, and wishes that death might come to him, 3:20-26.

Eliphaz replies by asserting *the orthodox doctrine* that suffering is the punishment of sin, 4:7, and declaring that the doctrine has been confirmed to him by observation, 4:8-11, and through revelation received by him in a vision, 4:12-21. He concludes by exhorting Job to repent of his wickedness, 5:8-26, assuring him that he himself has finally settled the whole question, 5:27.

Job replies that he finds no good in the doctrine, rejects its application to himself, 6:1-23, and appeals from his friends to God, 7:11-21.

Bildad is shocked at Job's wickedness, 8:1-7,

proves from the Scriptures that the doctrine is true, 8:8-10, and again exhorts Job to repent, 8:20-22.

Job assents to the doctrine, 9:2, but is horror-stricken that God does not respond to his appeal, 9:33-35, and that there is no future world to set this world right, 10:20-22.

Zophar replies with dogmatic assertion of the doctrine of the other friends, 11:1-12, and once more exhorts Job to repent, 11:13-20.

Job answers all three, avows that he is as wise as they are, 12:1-6, that they are liars for God, 13:7-12, appeals from them to God, vs. 20-28, and declares that he has no hope of a future life, 14:7-22.

This is the end of the first cycle. The others are mainly repetitions of the first in intenser forms of expression. There is, however, a progress toward serenity in Job's words, and he finally silences his opponents. At the end of the third cycle is,—

A poem in praise of wisdom, chapter 28, beginning with a magnificent description of mining, vs. 1-11, and comparing it with the search for wisdom, vs. 12-28. Then follow:

The final words of Job, chapters 29-31.

The answer of Jehovah, chapters 38-41.

The confession of Job and the record of his restoration and prosperity, chapter 42.

The speeches of Elihu, chapters 32-37, are a later orthodox addition condemning Job and disagreeing with the conclusion in chapter 42.

The book of Job is *one of the greatest masterpieces* of the world's literature. Its disclosure of the deepest human experiences, of the soul's struggle to find God, of the varying moods of mind in confession, aspiration, despair, and trust; its humor, invective, its revelation of God known and yet beyond all human knowledge, its utterances of instinctive longing for a future life, make it one of the most rewarding of all books for thorough study.

The outcome of the drama is that *the righteous man found God* through his experience of affliction. When he *saw* God, that is, perceived his character by spiritual insight, he discovered how foolish were his challenges and criticisms of the conventional God he had known.

VI

THE FIVE ROLLS

FIVE books were known to the Jews as Megilloth, *i.e.* The Rolls, because they were used for public reading in the synagogue on special occasions, and each was written on a separate parchment or papyrus. They are:

The Song of Songs, read at the Feast of the Passover.

Ruth, read at the Feast of Pentecost.

Esther, read at the Feast of Purim.

Ecclesiastes, read at the Feast of Tabernacles.

Lamentations, read on the Day of the Destruction of Jerusalem.

THE SONG OF SONGS

It means "the loveliest of all songs," 1:1, as
The Title "holy of holies" means the most holy
of all places. The common name, *Canticles*, is Latin, taken from the Vulgate version.

The work is ascribed to Solomon because he was

believed to be the most popular and prolific writer of songs, just as Proverbs and Ecclesiastes are assigned to him because he was the typically wise man of the Hebrews, 1 Kings 4:30-32.

The theme is the physical beauty of a man and a woman, and the consequent attraction of each for the other. It sings of the unreserved and complete devotion of each to the other. The lover's name is Solomon, 3:7, 9, 11; 8:12, because he was the most glorious king, and the greatest lover of women, 1 Kings 11:1-3, and the object of his love is the Shulammite or Shunammite, 6:13, because Abishag the Shunammite was the fairest maiden who could be found in Israel, 1 Kings 1:3, 4.

Various theories have been held. The most probable one is that the book is a sifted collection of songs sung by country people in Palestine on the wedding day and following days known as the King's Week. It has been appropriately called *the great Honey-moon Song* of all literature.

The book may be divided into seven cantos or idylls, which Professor Moulton names as the wedding day, 1:2-2:7; The bride's reminiscences, 2:8-3:5; The day of betrothal, 3:6-5:1; The bride's dream, 5:2-6:3; The bridegroom's musing on her beauty, 6:4-7:9;

The bride's longing for her home, 7:10-8:4, and the renewing of wedding vows, 8:5-14.

Some key to the book is necessary in order to read it intelligently. Several modern commentaries provide a key. A rendering is suggested here suggested of the first canto, as an example. The participants are the bride, bridegroom, and a chorus of maidens:

The bride speaks, 1:2-7, the chorus interrupting with the second, fourth and fifth clauses of verse 4. In verse 5 she says, "I am black;" when her lover interrupts, "nay, comely," she continues, "as the (black) tents of Kedar," and he again replies, "as the (white) curtains of Solomon."

The groom speaks, vs. 8-11; the bride, vs. 12-14; the groom, v. 15; the bride, 1:16-2:1; the groom, v. 2; the bride, vs. 3-6, while the idyll ends with the refrain, v. 7. Compare 3:5 and 8:4.

The warmth of amatory speech between lovers, though veiled in symbols, is more suited to oriental thought than to ours. Yet note the exquisite beauty of style that delights in the cool of the early dawn when shadows flee, 4:6, the fragrance of gardens, 2:12, 13; 4:13-15; the cooing of doves in rocky clefts, 2:14, and the sight of swift gazelles, 8:14.

In the Jewish church the Song of Songs was described as "that song in which God praises us and we him." The relation between husband

and wife is as often taken in the books of the Covenant to illustrate the feeling between God and his people as the relation between father and child, *e.g.* Isa. 54:4-8; 62:3-5.

Religious Use
In the Christian church also the relation between Christ and his church is typified by the relation between bridegroom and bride, Eph. 5:25-32, though neither Christ nor his apostles quoted from the Song of Songs. The interpretation of the book by religious people who have constituted the church of God through the ages must be recognized as an important phase of the inspiration through which the disposition of God towards them and their relations with him have been manifested.

This book was read in the synagogues of the time of Christ at the Feast of the Passover on the eighth day.

VII

THE ROLLS: RUTH AND ESTHER

MEN of strongly divergent religious and political opinions were leaders in the Hebrew commonwealth, and their views have found expression in the Hebrew Scriptures. For example some proclaimed that the temple at Jerusalem ought to invite all nations into it to worship God, Isa. 56:6, 7. They would extend to foreigners the same kindness as to Jews, Lev. 19:34. Others would exclude all except Jews from sharing in the worship of the temple, Deut. 23:3, 7, 8. The larger view is expressed in Psalm 67, the narrower in Psalm 137.

Two love stories in the third library strikingly contrast these views, Ruth and Esther.

THE BOOK OF RUTH

The name means "companion." The book stands for the breadth of Hebrew sympathy with the foreigners. The law excluding them, Theme Deut. 23:3-8, was adopted in Jerusalem about 621 B. C., 2 Kings 22:8-13. It could not

have been known in the time of David, 1 Sam. 22:3, 4, nor of Solomon, 1 Kings 11:1, nor of King Rehoboam whose mother was an Ammonitess, 1 Kings 14:21. But it was enforced with much cruelty after the return of the Jews from captivity, Ez. 10:1-17, 44. The story of Ruth is a plea for the foreigner.

The book is a little drama of village and family life. The belle of Bethlehem, Naomi (the Pleasant One) suffers poverty, exile in Moab, bereavement in the death of her husband, and of her sons leaving no offspring. She returns to Bethlehem empty handed, as Mara (the woman of bitter trials), with only her Moabite daughter-in-law, 1:22. But from her entrance into the town, the Moabiteess takes the center of the stage. She lighted on the right field to glean the barley, 2:3, won the hearts of the young reapers and of their employer, because of her grace of person and character, 2:7-13, got the place of honor at their table, 2:14, got one of the most honored of the Hebrews as her lover, 3:10, 11, and husband, 4:10, brought about a reversal of the sad lot of Naomi as completely as that of Job, 4:14, 15; and thus the Moabiteess, forbidden to enter the temple by the narrow law of Hebrew exclusiveness, became the most honored among Hebrew women, the ancestress of its greatest king and line of kings, 4:17.

The story is placed far back in the days of the Hebrew judges, 1:1. It was written when the customs of those days had long been forgotten, 4:7. It probably dates from about the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, and possibly was written by the husband of one of those unselfish and lovable foreign women who were being excluded from the Jewish state, Ez. 9:2. It is intended to prove that foreigners may be included in God's Covenant with his chosen people.

* This story in eighty-five verses cannot be matched in all the literature of the world for beauty, completeness and nobility of treatment of its theme. It was read in the synagogues at the Feast of Pentecost.

THE BOOK OF ESTHER

The book of Esther is in complete contrast to that of Ruth. The generosity of the latter toward foreigners is changed into intense bitterness. A Jewess, through the power of her physical beauty, secures the slaughter of multitudes of Gentiles.

The object of the book appears to have been to explain the origin and meaning of the Feast of Purim, 9:26-28. But especially it aims to glorify the Jews. The Jew Mordecai stands for a nation

superior to all others, 9:2. All other men do homage to Haman the Gentile, but the Jew does not, 3:2. Even in the judgment of his own wife the great Haman must fall before Mordecai, 6:13. The Jew Mordecai stands next to the king, 10:3.

Esther the Jewess surpasses in beauty the greatest Persian queen, Vashti, 1:19. All the fairest virgins of the empire having been examined, the king found the Jewess lovelier than all the other women, 2:17. The Jews had many enemies but ruled over them all, 9:1. Deliverance was certain to come to Jews in one way or another, 4:14. All people are moved to fear the Jews, and many because they fear become proselytes, 8:17.

In countries where the Jews are persecuted this book is read at the Feast of Purim in the month **The Use** Adar, with boisterous praises of Esther **of Esther** and Mordecai, and bitter curses against Haman. She gained her victory, according to the story, not by her character but by her physical beauty. She relentlessly pursued the enemies of the Jews after they had fallen, and after causing the killing of many thousands of them, asked and gained the privilege of slaughtering 75,000 more, including women and children, 9:10-16.

The book stands for the spirit fostered by centuries of foreign rule over the Jews, in which they suffered great persecutions. Though the name of God is not mentioned in it, it witnesses

to the confidence of his people that he would keep his Covenant with them.

But its assumption of national arrogance and its manifest hatred to other nations, while very acceptable to narrow and patriotic Jews, roused the strong opposition of those with broader vision to its admission among the other sacred writings.

After its acceptance by a Jewish synod Alexandrian Jews sought to improve it by additions which are preserved in the Apocrypha. Some Christian teachers in every age have rejected it. Martin Luther said of it: "I am so hostile to this book that I wish it did not exist."

VIII

THE FIVE ROLLS: ECCLESIASTES AND LAMENTATIONS

THE book of Ecclesiastes is called in Hebrew, Koheleth, which is inaccurately translated the "Preacher," 1:1. It means rather a presider over an assembly, (*ecclesia*), perhaps of debaters. The reasons are decisive, in the subjects discussed, the language used, and references to the book in Jewish literature that it was written several centuries after the time of Solomon.

The theme is stated at the beginning 1:2, that *everything is valueless, wearisome, aimless*. It is amplified in a dreary reiteration of the emptiness of life and its monotonous round, vs. 3-11.

Then follows the mention of the pursuits and experiences which absorb the lives of men, which the author declares bring no satisfaction, but in the end are "vanity and a striving after wind." These are:

Study, the search after wisdom, 1:12-18.

Pleasure, the search for self gratification, 2:1-11,
with reflections, 2:12-17 (compare Job 3:1 ff.).

Labor, 2:18-23.

Society, 3:16-4:3.

Religion, 5:1-7.

Wealth, 5:10-17.

Length of Life, 11:9-12:8.

Various observations are interspersed, many of them without apparent connection. Some are wise and some are otherwise, but the **The Tone** tone of the whole book is extremely pessimistic and discouraging. The wearisomely reiterated conclusion of each and all the writer's observations is "this also is vanity," *e.g.* 2:18-26; 6:1-6. Chapters 7-10 are disconnected moralizing, ringing changes on the refrain that death is the end of all things, and ending with the oft-repeated counsel of the poet Horace, "*Carpe diem*," which in substance is, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." The book is largely a reflection of Greek thought in the third and second centuries B. C.

Ecclesiastes is an ideal biography of a soul traversing the whole realm of experience, good, evil, and indifferent, that ends in self, **Its Use** finding no satisfaction in it. The results of such an experience are summarized in the inference of the later editor who added 12:11,

12, and perhaps the still later one who wrote 12:13, 14.

The book is a chapter in the education of those who learn by experience of many disappointments that *the true end of life is keeping covenant with God*.

It was read in the synagogues at the Feast of Tabernacles.

THE BOOK OF LAMENTATIONS

The book of Lamentations is usually placed third in the list of the Five Rolls.

It consists of five poems, of which the third has sixty-six verses, the others twenty-two verses each, the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet. The first four are acrostic. In the first, second, and fourth poem each verse begins with a letter of the alphabet in succession; in the third each of three verses begins with the same letter. Compare the structure of this poem with that of Ps. 119. The first four poems are elegies, the fifth is a prayer.

Its theme is the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar 586 B. C. These dirges lament the ruin of the city with intensest passion, depicting scenes of horror and pathos, the palaces of Judah destroyed, the temple desecrated, starving women who had been reared in refinement and luxury killing and eating their own children.

In the first elegy the poet sings his sorrow, vs. 1-11. Then the city utters her woe, vs. 12-18, and appeals to God against her enemies, vs. 19-22.

In the second also the divine judgment is acknowledged, vs. 1-10, the inconsolable shame and sorrow are poured forth, vs. 11-19, and an appeal is made to God for his pity, vs. 20-22.

The third begins with bitter lament, vs. 1-20, offers prayers of submission and hope, vs. 21-36, of penitence and confession, vs. 37-54, and pleads for vengeance on the enemies of Jerusalem, vs. 55-66.

The fourth laments the fate of the people, vs. 1-6, of the princes, vs. 7-11, of priests and prophets, vs. 13-16, of the king, vs. 17-20, and prophesies doom on Edom, vs. 21, 22, because of her cruelties, Ps. 137:7.

The fifth is a lament over the sorrows of the city, vs. 1-18, and concludes with a passionate prayer for deliverance, vs. 19-22.

Its author is unknown. Probably there were more than one. Jeremiah may have written one or more of the poems, as is stated in the Greek translation, 2 Chron, 35:25.

The poems are elaborately constructed, yet every view of common grief, and every suggestion which might stir a chord of sorrow are brought together to complete the picture

of woe which followed the *breaking of the Covenant with God* by the nation.

The Lamentations were read publicly on the anniversary of the Day of the Destruction of Jerusalem and are still read beside the old wall of the city by devout Jews.

IX

THE HISTORICAL BOOKS

ALTHOUGH a considerable part of what we call the Old Testament was written before the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, all the three collections, the Law, the Prophets and the Writings, were made after their return to Judea. Nearly all of the books already in existence were rewritten and edited. The entire period from 538 B. C. to the beginning of the Christian era is therefore of the greatest interest in the study of the making of the Bible.

Our only historical record of what occurred to the Jews during the first century after the return from the captivity is in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. These are only one book in the Jewish and Greek collections. In early Christian use they were known as first and second Ezra.

These books and the Chronicles are practically one collection, compiled from various sources by the same editor more than one hundred years after the latest events mentioned in them occurred. The division between the roll of Chronicles and

the roll of Ezra was in the middle of a sentence. Compare 2 Chron. 36:22, 23 with Ezra 1:1-4 where those two verses are repeated and completed. The division into four rolls was probably to make them of most convenient size for reading and reference.

THE BOOK OF THE CHRONICLES

The book of Chronicles comes last in the Hebrew Bible, but its records precede those of Ezra-Nehemiah. We therefore study this book first.

The death of the Hebrew nation through the captivity was the beginning of the resurrection of Its the Hebrew spirit which reconstructed Purpose the Hebrew religion. It was to be expected that the Jews, returning to their own land to reestablish public worship at Jerusalem, would produce *a general review of their history* from the beginning of the world under the guidance of their God. The compiler of Chronicles undertook this task. He was apparently a Levite, probably a priest, whose chief interest was to magnify the temple and its ritual. He adapted the history to the needs of his own time.

The book is not a continuous history, but a compilation of documents joined together into Its a narrative, with little effort to con-Sources ceal its composite structure. Books of Samuel, Nathan, and Gad, 1 Chron. 29:29, and

various other records, 2 Chron. 9:29; 12:15; 13:22; 26:22; 33:18, were drawn upon. But large portions are copied from the books of Samuel and Kings.

Chapters 1-9 are compiled from the first thirty-six chapters of Genesis. Chapters 10-20 are the history of David's reign, introductory to the long account of his purchase of a site for the temple, his preparations for building it and arranging in detail its services. 2 Chron. chapters 1-9 are the account of Solomon's reign. Chapters 10-36 are the history of Judah from Rehoboam to the exile.

References in the book indicate that its compiler used extensively "commentaries" on histories of the Hebrews, 2 Chron. 12:15; 24:27, *i.e.* reflections and conclusions on the religious significance of historic events as recorded. There are evidences that he was often not careful to verify the statements he used, while he used them in good faith to exalt the heroes of Judah and to show that God always rewards the pious and punishes the wicked. For example, he omits all reference to David's adultery and Solomon's idolatry, and the tribute which Hezekiah paid to Sennacherib, 2 Kings 18:14-16. He magnifies the greatness of his heroes, *e.g.* the fifty shekels of silver which David paid for the site of the temple, 2 Sam. 24:24, become six

hundred shekels of gold in the story of the Chronicler, 1 Chron. 21:25. The income of Solomon in the height of his prosperity was 666 talents of gold, 2 Chron. 9:13. But David accumulated 100,000 talents of gold besides a million talents of silver for building the temple, 1 Chron. 22:14.

The Chronicler knows no history worth recording except that of Judah. Israel is an apostate kingdom. The pious kings are the greatest. David had an army of more than a million and a half, 1 Chron. 21:5, and Jehoshaphat over a million, 2 Chron. 17:12-19. But Rehoboam had only 180,000, 2 Chron. 11:1. There are frequent changes and sometimes contradictions of the original sources.

The religious value of Chronicles does not rest on the accuracy of its history. Its account of Hezekiah's passover, *e.g.* 2 Chron. 30:1-27, which has little historic basis, shows a breadth of sympathy, an exaltation of the spirit above the letter, not excelled in the Old Testament. The book is also valuable as exhibiting the character of Judaism in the third century B. C.

X

THE BOOK OF EZRA-NEHEMIAH

THIS book contains our only historical records of the Jews for the century from 538-432 B. C.

Its significance in the history of the Bible is not second to any other of the Sacred Writings.

Its Value For it covers the period of the beginning of Judaism in which the library of the books of the Covenant was created, and which brought forth Jesus Christ, the Founder of the New Covenant.

To understand its relation to the world history of the period some knowledge is required of the

Its Place in World History movements of the nations with which the Jews were most closely connected.

Therefore the student should become familiar with a map of the Old Testament World, a chronology of the kings of Babylon and Persia from Cyrus to Artaxerxes II, and at least an outline of the events during their reigns. The location of the little province of Judea in relation to the successive empires of the east and to Egypt and Greece on the south west should be kept clearly in mind.

Its relation to other books of the Bible makes it important to read in connection with the history of the Jews during the seventy years of which the historic book gives no record, of Isaiah, chapters 40-66, and several of the Psalms.

Its place in the Bible the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah stimulating the building of the temple, of Malachi picturing the degeneracy

Historic Outline before they were brought together by the Chronicler. Their arrangement is not entirely chronological. They include documents in Hebrew, such as the memoirs of Ezra 7:27-8:34; 9:1-15; and of Nehemiah, 1:1-7:4; and documents in Aramaic, Ez. 4:8-6:18; 7:12-26. They are so used as to represent the point of view of the editor of Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah, explained in the last chapter.

These records describe the return from Babylon and the laying of the foundations of the temple, Ez. 1:1-4:6; 4:24-6:22. Then after an interval of about seventy years without record, the work of Nehemiah in building the walls of Jerusalem and organizing its civic life includes Neh. chapters 1-7 and 11-13, inserting between chapters 6 and 7 Ez. 4:6-27. Neh. 7:6-73 is a repetition of Ez. 2:1-70. The work of Ezra in teaching and enforcing the Law is told in Ez. chapters 7-10,

(inserting Neh. 7:70-8:18 after Ez. chapter 8) and Neh. chapters 8-10. The conclusion is the Covenant, renewed and signed by the leading men, adapted to their times, Neh. 10:1-31, with pledges of contributions for the maintenance of the temple service, vs. 32-39.

Besides the great importance of this book illuminating the period of the organization and its early development of Judaism, it presents the life work of representative Religious Value characters created by self-denying faith in God: Ezra, the exponent of the law and the builder of the church, and Nehemiah, the able, daring, devoted civil ruler, one of the most worthy and winsome in Hebrew history, told in their own words.

XI

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Two things are essential to the forming of an intelligent opinion of the book of Daniel — a study of Jewish apocalyptic writings and a knowledge of the career of Antiochus Epiphanes. Space is lacking for their consideration here further than brief explanation.

Apocalyptic literature is a method of disclosing the author's views of the spiritual and especially

A p o c a - the future world by description of things
lyptic Lit- seen and heard in visions and dreams.
erature

The things seen are symbols, usually of animals of various sorts and mythological beings, Dan. 7:2-8. The apocalypse was a prevailing type of Jewish literature during the two centuries before and the first century after the beginning of the Christian era. By it was expressed the faith in the overthrow of Israel's foes and her triumphant rule under the coming Messiah.

The reign of Antiochus IV, called Epiphanes (the "manifestation" of God) 175-164
Antiochus B. C., was the most cruel and oppressive in Jewish annals. His purpose was to crush out

the religion of Jehovah and forcibly to establish in its stead the Greek religion among the Jews. He was supported by one Jewish party, but opposed to the death by another party, the forerunner of the Pharisees. The conflict resulted in the victory of Judas Maccabeus and his brothers, the purification of the temple which Antiochus had polluted by the image of the Greek god Zeus, Matt. 24:15; Dan. 9:27; 11:31, and the practical political independence of the Jews for a century.

The purpose of the book of Daniel was to encourage the religious party of the Jews under **Its** their intolerable persecutions by Anti-**Purpose** ochus. Its hero and reputed author, according to a common custom of apocalyptic writing, was a renowned sage of ancient time, Ezekiel 14:14,20; 28:3, whose name may have been borne by a Hebrew youth of noble birth carried away with the first company deported to Babylon, Dan. 1:3-6.

The book is divided into two parts. The first, chapters 1-6 is a *series of six adventures* by **Its** Daniel and his companions, in which he **Structure** and they were found to be far superior in wisdom, skill, and strength to any one ever known in Babylon, because of the superiority of Jehovah their God, 1:20; 2:46-49; 3:29; 4:37; 5:29; 6:25-27. Each of these stories is independent of the others, as the final sentence in each

shows. It is probable that each was circulated as an independent story for the encouragement of the faithful. Not all their statements are supported by known historic facts.

Chapters 7-12 present a *series of visions* with the same object. A key to their interpretation may be found in ch. 11 where the chief characters named are easily discernible by the student of the history of Persia and Syria. The apparent prophecy is history, and of the four kings, Ez. 4:5-7, Xerxes, "far richer than them all," Dan 11:2, stirred up Greece by a great campaign in which he was defeated. Afterwards rose up Alexander the Great, v. 3., (the he-goat, 8:5,21) whose kingdom was divided among his four generals, "not to his posterity," v. 4. One of these, the king of the South, Ptolemy I "shall be strong," but not so strong as his former subordinate, Seleucus I, v. 5. The attempted alliance between Egypt and Syria by the marriage of Berenice, daughter of Ptolemy II to Antiochus II shall not succeed, v. 6, but her brother Ptolemy III shall defeat Seleucus II, v. 7, and carry away the idols and treasures of Syria to Egypt, v. 8. The king of Syria shall attempt a reprisal in vain, v. 9. Antiochus IV is "the little horn," 8:9ff, "the king of fierce countenance," 8:23-25, the blasphemous one, 11:36-39. But persecution shall purify the good, and when trials are completed

men shall be divided according to character, 12:8-10. This brief interpretation may aid the student to get at the meaning of the entire section.

The book must have been written before the death of Antiochus, 11:21-45, which occurred 164 B. C., and before the rededication of the temple by Judas Maccabeus, 8:14, which was accomplished in 165, about three and a half years, 2300 evenings and mornings, after the daily sacrifice at the temple was stopped by Antiochus, 8:11. The most probable date is between 167 and 165 B. C.

To the Jews, enduring for the sake of their religion the hottest fires of persecution they had ever known, this book was a message to sustain their faith against the fierce assaults of Antiochus, an assurance that their God who reigns always, who had delivered his own people in the past, would surely reward their fidelity also by speedy deliverance; that the four kingdoms, Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece, three of which had already perished while the fourth was doomed, would be followed by the Kingdom of God which was to be everlasting, 7:14, 18, 22, 27.

To us the abiding truth is set forth sublimely in this book that human history is proceeding according to a divine plan towards a final consummation purposed by God. The desecration

of holy things and the injustice inflicted on the people of God are only forerunners of the time when judgment shall be pronounced on the wicked and the Kingdom of God shall be supreme, 12:1-3.

XII

A GENERAL SURVEY OF "THE WRITINGS"

HAVING studied the eleven books of the third and latest collection included in the Hebrew Scriptures, we are prepared to estimate their value and define their use.

The Psalms are Hebrew in their forms of poetry, which is a rhythm of thoughts rather than of words, a response of thought to thought. They are Hebrew in the imagery with which their thoughts are clothed. But they are universal in the experiences which they describe and express. They utter the elemental emotions of humanity. The supreme and eternal God is the object toward whom those who wrote and those who use the Psalms are always turning, in penitence, petition, praise. The deeps of human feeling in these utterances respond to the depths of His feeling toward men. The Psalter has been described as an instrument giving forth "the whole music of the human heart, swept by the hand of its Maker." The Psalms belong to all humanity in all times and places and

will continue to be used as long as the world lasts.

The Proverbs are Hebrew in their language. But they are lessons learned in daily life among all peoples, especially in its primitive stages. They are lessons tested by successive generations till they have been molded into the greatest terseness. They are the philosophy of the childhood of humanity, being consciously educated by God. So long as that education continues this text book will be of supreme value for its purpose.

The book of Job deals with the profoundest problem connected with man's duty and destiny. The cry of the soul out of the depths which this book utters is the cry of universal humanity. The answer out of the heavens is one for which all men listen, though it is now more clearly heard and better understood than when the book was written. But this record of the experience by which one child of God struggling through unfathomed depths of mysterious suffering came at last to see God, 42:5, 6, is without a parallel in the world's literature.

Important phases of Hebrew national life are revealed in the five Rolls.

The Song of Songs gathers up into a sheaf of harmony the simple joyousness of Hebrew country life at its climax — the days when love between a

man and a woman is crowned with union. Passion in pure marriage has never been more nobly expressed than in the bride's rhapsody, 8:6, 7.

The five poems of the book of Lamentations describe the greatest calamity that ever befell a nation, pressed down on the soul of the writer as a burden of never expiated guilt, both for himself and his people.

The stories of Ruth and Esther both have as their theme the influence of woman's beauty. In the first, mercy triumphs over judgment and the despised foreigner wins the highest place of honor in the nation's history. In the second, the vengeance of a weak people triumphs over the power of their rulers because they are the people of God.

The book of Ecclesiastes traces the path through the entire round of cynicism and skepticism to the conclusion that reverence toward God and obedience to his will are the only true aim of life.

Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah furnish the historical setting of the spiritual development of Judaism and of the library of the Covenant which grew toward its completion during the times here recorded.

The book of Daniel is the great apocalypse of the old Covenant which sees with confidence into the future when the Kingdom of God shall triumph

over other kingdoms and be established as the one everlasting kingdom.

For its full interpretation each book needs to stand in the place assigned to it in the completed library. Take, for example, the six
 2. Con-
 sidered as poetic books which undertake to answer
 Related to the three fundamental questions: What
 one is God? What is man? What is the
 Another universe in which they live and act?

Three of these books are *lyric* poetry, written to be sung with a musical instrument. The Psalms express the whole range of human feeling, yet their theme is *Redemption from sin* — man's need of it, and God's provision for it. The two supreme passions have each one book. The theme of the Song of Solomon is the love between one man and one woman — the foundation of the home and of society. The theme of Lamentations is love of country, illustrated by the disaster falling on a people of intensest patriotism as a consequence of their perversion of that passion. The three books are emotional expressions used to declare and illustrate the relations between God and humanity.

But such emotional experience must have a rational basis, and this is furnished by three books of *didactic* poetry, belonging to the domain of reason. The first of these is Proverbs, whose thesis is that wisdom is blessedness, and folly is

misery. Wisdom is the fear of God and folly is disregard of him. Two apparent exceptions to this thesis are presented; the first is Job whose wisdom does not protect him from the profoundest misery, and the second is Ecclesiastes, whose hero has everything he desires and cares nothing for God.

But both exceptions are proved only apparent. Job holds to the integrity of his manhood and remains faithful to God, and his prosperity is restored to him in double measure. Koheleth has all the wealth he desires and everything that can minister to his pleasure, yet in the end he finds them all "vanity and a striving after wind," and learns that the only value in life is found by fearing God and keeping his commandments. The supreme theme, Redemption, is interpreted by each book in its relation to the others.

The ruling principle which secured them admission into the library of the Covenant was their contribution to the meaning of the Covenant. It is not apparent in every book, standing by itself. But as interpreted by the church a genuine contribution to the meaning of the Covenant is made in each book. For example, the collection of love songs have become expressions of the love between God and his people, and the interpretation by the church which has

3. Con-
sidered in
Their
Relation
to the
Covenant

decided the character of the books is certainly not less inspiration from God than that of the composer of the songs and the writers of the books.

The dates when most of them were written or compiled are uncertain. The process of com-

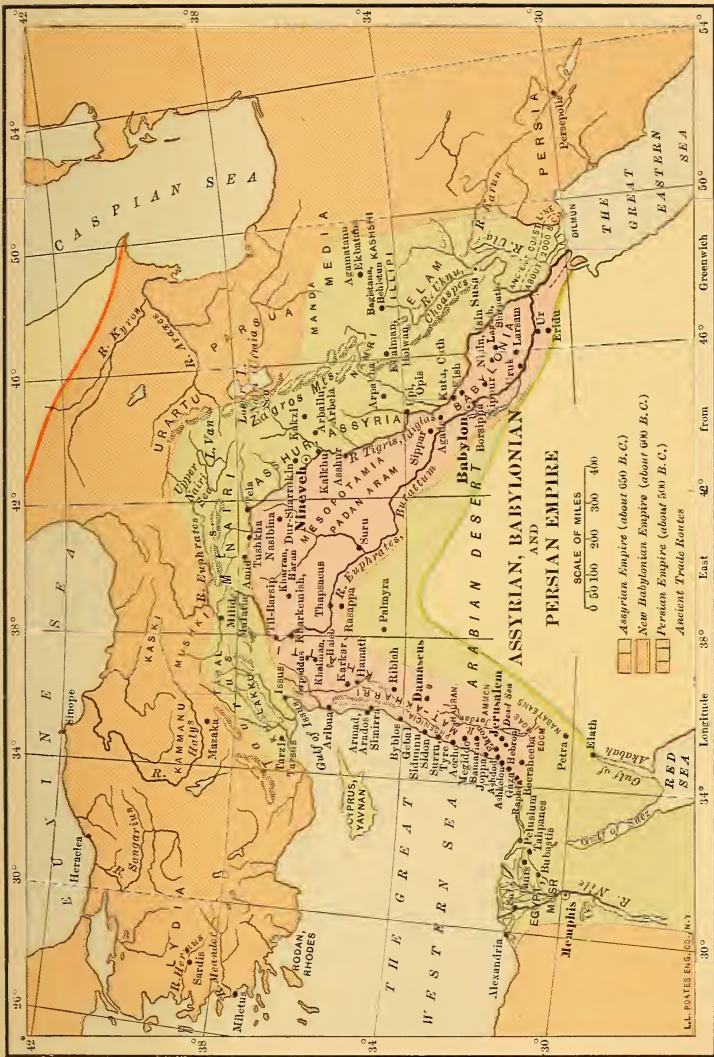
position of single books, such as Psalms
 4. Con- sidered as and Proverbs, extended over several
 to their hundred years. Portions of them were
 Place in the Church regarded as sacred before the books
 were completed. No doubt individual

Psalms were received as revealing the mind of God long before the final collection was made.

“The Writings” are mentioned by Jewish writers in the second century before Christ along with the Law and the Prophets. But the Writings were never regarded as of equal authority with the Law. Eminent rabbis disputed the claim of the Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, and Esther to a place in the canon of the Scriptures.

The Jewish synod assembled about 90 A. D. at Jamnia, not far from Joppa, approved all the thirty-nine books now included in the Old Testament.

PART TWO
THE PROPHETS



I

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE BIBLE

THREE stages must be kept in mind in the study of the making of the Bible: *first*, the period in which the Hebrew literature began; *second*, the period in which that literature took shape in books edited and revised till they came into their final form; and *third*, their collection into a library and elevation to the place of Holy Scripture.

The first period in the history of Hebrew literature was like that of our own and other nations.

Materials for National Literature The Hebrews from Egypt settled in Palestine somewhere about the year 1200 B. C. Their language was probably adopted from the Canaanites whom they conquered. But their national consciousness, which must have preceded their literature, seems hardly to have begun to develop till the union of the tribes under David, about the year 1000 B. C. They inherited, however, *traditions* of a distant past and *various literary materials* from peoples out of whom they had sprung. The

national literature grew from these materials as beginnings. They may be classed as:

1. Songs. The earliest permanent literary expressions of national life are stories of brave deeds Songs of of love and war, often in the form of Heroes ballads. Of lost collections of such ballads, two are mentioned in the Bible. One was called the *Book of the Wars of Jehovah*, from which several songs are quoted, Num. 21:14, 15, 17, 18, 27-30. They described how the leaders fought for Israel and how their God helped them. The other was called the *Book of Jashar*, (the Upright Ones). Its songs were descriptions of heroes whose greatness was measured by their devotion to Jehovah. Joshua quoted from it when he celebrated his triumph over the Amorites, Josh. 10:12, 13. It is named as the source from which David's elegy over Saul and Jonathan was taken, 2 Sam. 1:18-27. Many noble *songs from various sources* have been preserved in the sacred books of Hebrews, *e.g.* the triumph songs of Moses, Ex. 15:1-18, of Deborah, Jud. 5:1-31, and the songs of Balaam, Num. 24:3-9, 15-24.

These songs were used for the religious instruction of the people, Deut. 31:19, 22, 30; 2 Sam. 1:18.

2. Stories and legends. Among the earliest questions arising in the minds of a people coming into a national consciousness are those which con-

cern *their ancestry*, the reasons for their being, and their mission. In the Orient even to this day Stories of such questions are answered by story tell-Heroes ers rehearsing stories they have learned from others, handed down from generation to generation. Thus stories of *hero ancestors* — Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Samuel, Saul, David, and other men of olden time came into the form of vivid dramatic pictures with a charm unsurpassed in all literature.

These stories were told to instruct the people concerning the care of Jehovah for them and his guidance in making them a nation.

3. Laws. At first the laws of the Hebrews were simple *rules* necessary for the *worship* of Earliest their God, for mutual *protection*, for Laws purposes of *health*, and for *defence* against enemies. Such rules were recognized as of divine authority before any formal collection was made of them; *e.g.* long before the law was issued at Sinai its commands were known. The Sabbath was to be kept, Gen. 2:3; murder, Gen. 9:6, theft, Gen. 31:32, adultery, Gen. 20:3, were forbidden. Many collections of laws were made before any were permanently preserved.

The Decalogue, probably the earliest collection in the Bible, written on tables of stone, has come down to us in different forms, Ex. 34:17-27; 20:1-17, Deut. 5:4-22. Three successive stages

are illustrated by the three ancient codes, The Book of the Covenant, Ex. 20:20-23:33, The Deuteronomic Code, Deut. chs. 12-26, The Law of Holiness, Lev. chs. 17-26.

4. History. The historical books of the Bible are compilations of preceding histories, the method Bible and purpose of which will be considered History in the next chapter. They belong to a later period of literature than the composition of ballads, stories, and laws.

5. Prophecy. Sermons, essays, and poems considering the problems developed in settled society Writings and the duties of men toward one another of Prophets and toward God in such society belong to the later periods of literature. The prophets of Israel were the *literary men* and the *teachers* of their times. Their sayings and writings are the principal subjects for study in the chapters that follow.

Thus the Hebrew literature, out of which the books of the Covenant were selected for the sacred library, grew from songs, folk lore, laws, historic records, essays, sermons, and epistles.

II

THE PROPHETIC BOOKS

THE Prophets of the Bible were men of God, 1 Sam. 2:27; 9:6; 1 Kings 12:22; 2 Kings 4:21; Who were servants of Jehovah, Isa. 20:3; Jer. the 25:4; messengers of Jehovah, Isa. 42:19, Prophets Hag. 1:13. They brought the message or word of God to men as his representatives. The word of God came to them, Jer. 14:1; 15:1; Zech. 8:1, and they delivered it, Am. 1:3, 6, 9, etc. They were thus *divinely commissioned preachers* of righteousness to individuals, and to the nation. They saw God, Isa. 6:1, with spiritual vision and apprehended his will. The predictive element was a minor one in the prophets' mission. They were the *religious teachers of Israel*.

The Historical Books of the Old Testament were written for the purpose of conveying *religious* Purpose of the Historical Books *instruction*. Their authors used the events of history to show how God cared for his people, how he rewarded loyalty to Himself and punished disobedience, therefore the writers of these books

were prophets. Records of the history of the human race and of Israel existed before the books of the Bible were written, 1 Kings 11:41; 14:29. Their authors selected such records of facts and events as would reveal the presence and work of Jehovah fulfilling *the promises made in his Covenant* with his people.

Hence we find certain events dwelt on with abundant details, such as the first observance of the passover, the crossing of the Red Sea, the construction of the tabernacle and the dedication of the temple, while long periods of time are passed by with only brief mention or none. Hence also the same event is sometimes repeated in different ways *to direct attention to the lesson* the prophet desires to impress.

These statements account for the fact that the Jews did not call any of their Holy Scriptures histories. The books of the first library of the Covenant they called *The Law*, while all those of the second were called *The Prophets*, Matt. 7:12; 5:17; 22:40.

The historical books of the second library were called *The Former Prophets*; Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings. The study of the structure of the Former Prophets involves also that of the books of the first library. Four narratives, once distinct, are blended in these books.

Use of
Historic
Events

Structure
of the
Former
Prophets

The oldest prophetic history of Israel appears to have been *written in Judah.* It traces the history of the human race from the Creation and of the Hebrew people from Abraham down to the time of Solomon, therefore it could not have been written until after the division of the Kingdom. It was probably not earlier than 825 B. C. The writers used ancient songs, stories of heroes, collections of laws, general and local traditions, and prevalent views of God, man and the universe, modifying them in accordance with their own high ideals of the character of God and of his relations with Israel. They aimed to set forth *the historic foundations of the Covenant* between Jehovah and his people.

The Northern Prophetic History was prepared in a similar way and with the same purpose, probably about half a century later, *by prophets of the northern kingdom,* which was often called *Ephraim*, Hos. 5:11-14. Their history began with Abraham and recorded the important events in Israel to the establishment of the monarchy under Saul.

These two histories were blended about a century after the fall of the northern kingdom, which occurred in 722 B. C., 2 Kings 17:5, 6. This work was done by a prophet or group of prophets about the time

of the great reformation of Josiah, 621 B. C., 2 Kings, ch. 22.

A brief priestly history was written during the captivity in Babylon under the influence of The changed views as illustrated in the Priestly prophecy of Ezekiel and the accounts History of the work of Ezra the scribe. The tendency of the time was to idealize the early days and heroes of Israel and to trace back to them the law and ritual of later Judaism. This work outlined the history down to the conquest of Canaan.

The final blending of the combined prophetic and the priestly histories produced the five books The of the Law, that is, the Pentateuch, Hexateuch and the book of Joshua. These six books together are called the Hexateuch. This blending also points out the method of the production of the other books of the Former Prophets. The Judean and Ephraimite histories are traceable in the earlier part of the book of Samuel. The influence of the book of Deuteronomy, published in Judah 621 B. C., was marked especially on Joshua and the historical books following it, as will be shown in later chapters.

The Latter Prophets follow in order of arrangement those called the Former Prophets, The though many of them are of earlier Latter Prophets dates than the first four books of the second library. They are mainly collections of

reports of sermons delivered on occasions of great importance in the nation's history, with some epistles and historical records.

The four collections of the Latter Prophets appear under the titles Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve.

III

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

THE book of Joshua was placed by the Jews first in order in the library of the Prophets. It The Book is closely *affiliated with the library of Joshua the Law*, as describing the fulfillment of Jehovah's promise of the Covenant to establish Israel in the promised land. It existed for a long time beside the Law library but without being admitted into it.

Its subject was the *conquest of Canaan*. The earliest traditions of the descendants of Abraham The had claimed that land as Jehovah's Subject gift to them, Gen. 15:18; Ex. 23: 20-33; Deut. 11:24. The story of Joshua was the complement of the books of the Law, a true and national product of the patriotic religious spirit which ascribed to the favor of Jehovah all the possessions of Israel.

Its hero was Joshua, the captain of Jehovah's The host, always obedient to the one su- Choice and preme Hero of all the Holy Scriptures, Training Josh. 5.13-15. He is introduced as *the of Joshua chosen successor* of the first leader and lawgiver of the Hebrews, commissioned by him to

bring them into the promised land, Deut. 31:23. The work that Moses the man of God laid down was taken up by Joshua, with the consent of the people, Deut. 34:9. Moses had trained Joshua as his lieutenant, Ex. 17:8-10; 33:11; and *Jehovah confirmed the commission* given by Moses, Josh. 1:1-9.

Its contents are in three clearly marked divisions: the *conquest of the land*, chs. 1-12; the *division of the land* among the tribes, chs. 13-21; the *conclusion* of the book, describing a dispute between the tribes on the west of the Jordan and those on the east, and its settlement, ch. 22, and two closing addresses of Joshua to the tribes concerning the Covenant, chs. 23, 24.

The book contains stirring and picturesque descriptions of heroic deeds and marvelous adventures, which though told in prose are *poetic in spirit* rather than exact history. Examples in the first division are the stories of Rahab and the spies, the carrying of the ark of the Covenant across the Jordan, the circumcision of the people at Gilgal, the capture of Jericho, the crime and destruction of Achan and his family before the city of Ai, the strategy of the Gibeonites, the battles of Beth-horon and Makkedah. These stories are followed by a mathematical summary of the results of the

conquest in ch. 12, and two accounts of distributions of territory by lot to the twelve tribes, chs. 13-17, 18-21. There is a circumstantial statement in ch. 22 of the trouble between the western tribes and the two and a half eastern tribes because the latter had built a great altar, 22:10, which the former thought was a step toward setting up a new religion, 22:16. The explanation given was satisfactory and the threatened war was averted, 22:26-29, 33. The two addresses of Joshua, chs. 23, 24, differ so notably in point of view and in style that they strongly suggest different authors. An appendix, 24:29-33, records the burial of the body of Joshua and of the bones of Joseph and Eleazar.

Several documents have been *brought together* and edited to make this book, all of them written several generations after the events occurred. Prominent among them are the two histories of the Judean and northern kingdoms, described in the last chapter. The combination has been modified by an editor writing in the spirit of the book of Deuteronomy, who *idealized* the *history* and made it fulfill the divine purpose as it had been declared. For example, since God had commanded Israel to destroy the Canaanites utterly, Deut. 7:2, the Deuteronomic editor described Israel as doing this, Josh. 11:12-15. In one of Joshua's farewell

addresses it is declared that the native tribes of Canaan have all been driven out, 24:11-13; in the other the work is still unfinished, 23:5-8. But other records showed that they were never wholly driven out, Jud. 3:1-6.

Its historic value is to be estimated with a due sense of the prevailing method in early times to recount the nation's progress for the purpose of exalting the power and enforcing the commands of Jehovah.

• Read as a plain record of facts this book has many inconsistencies and confusing statements. For example, in 8:3, 4 there are 30,000 men for ambush against Ai; in 8:12 they are 5,000. In 10:40-42 all the South country is conquered and every living thing destroyed. In 14:6-15 that country, still unconquered, is given to Caleb because he is able to drive out the people, and he does it, 15:13-19.

But read as a *poetic description* of great events in the progress of Israel the book contains *historic information* of great value. The events actually occurred. The ideals, the ethical and spiritual truths they are used to illustrate, are of the greatest abiding value, setting forth the character and will of God as he revealed himself to Israel in the formative period of the nation.

The geographical descriptions in this book

require a study of Palestine and the surrounding countries. A clear idea should be gained of the land promised, Gen. 15:18-21, and to be possessed, Josh. 13:1. The *territory promised* stretched from the Lebanon mountains on the north to the Desert of Paran on the south, and from the Mediterranean Sea to the Euphrates River. The *portion* mainly *occupied* by the Israelites, however, was about 180 miles from north to south and from thirty to fifty miles in breadth. The physical structure of the country also, its plains and mountains, rivers and lakes and climate have an important part in the study of the making of the Bible.

The people of mixed character with whom the Hebrews mingled and whom they supplanted, Ex. 23:23, Josh. 24:11, had much to do in shaping Hebrew literature. A *map*, a *chronological table*, and a modern *Bible dictionary* are essential to a knowledge of the history of the Hebrew Scriptures.

IV

THE BOOK OF JUDGES

IN this book are the most natural and lifelike pictures to be found in the Old Testament of **The Book** *the primitive life and customs* of the clans and tribes in Palestine which finally came to be welded into the nation of Israel.

Its Object The object of the writer and compiler is first of all to impress the truth that *Jehovah rewards* his chosen people for loyalty to him *and surely punishes* them for disobedience to him. With this purpose in view he records such currently reported events in their early history as will best illustrate and emphasize his message. His often repeated refrain is, "The children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah:" 2:11; 3:7, 12; 4:1 etc. Then follows the statement: "Therefore the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel." The next step is "when the children of Israel cried unto Jehovah, Jehovah raised them up a savior." The saviors were the judges, of whom twelve are named, one for each tribe.

Four appearances of *the Angel of the Covenant* are recorded, bringing messages of judgments and deliverances: at Bochim, 2:1-5; **The Four Great Events** at Ophrah, 6:11 ff; at Zorah, 13:2-5; and at Bethel, 20:18, 27, 28. These were the four greatest events in a period apparently of some three hundred years, which probably however was not more than half of that time. The entire history is recorded as *a process* many times repeated of *sin, rebuke, punishment, and rescue*.

The materials of the book were not originally intended for this purpose. They are mainly **Its Structure** folk stories of a primitive time, some of them without religious teaching in themselves, picturing the tribes of Israel coming into a land already populated, held together by loose bonds, gradually acquiring supremacy and approaching toward unity through several generations by means of wars, chs. 4, 5, stratagems, ch. 9, and social alliances, 3:5, 6, with neighboring peoples.

The book appears to have begun at 2:6, where the first four verses repeat in a different order the close of Joshua, 24:28-31. *A general introduction*, 2:6-3:6 explains the religious meaning found by the writer in the stories that follow. Next are recounted *the brave deeds of the judges*, who were leaders of their own tribes, though often spoken of as though they were national rulers.

The most famous of these leaders were *Othniel* of Judah, 3:9-11, *Ehud* of Benjamin 3:12-30, *Barak* of Naphtali, 4:1-5:31, *Gideon* of Manasseh, 6:1-9:32, *Jephthah* of Gad, 10:6-12:7, and *Samson* of Dan, 13:1-16:31. *The episode of Abimelech* presents a series of vivid dramatic pictures, ch. 9. The opening section, chs. 1:1-2:5, is of different character from the book itself, compare 1:1 with 2:6, 7, and appears to have been taken from *an older account of the conquest* of Canaan by Israel.

Two appendices have been added to the book. The first, chs. 17, 18, accounts for the migration of the tribe of Dan from the plain of Sharon to the foot of Mt. Hermon, and for the founding of the sanctuary at that place. Chs. 19-21 are a story of lust and cruelty avenged in an uprising of all the tribes by which the tribe of Benjamin was almost annihilated. Such a united movement at that time seems hardly probable, but the story testifies to a quickening moral sense in Israel.

The life of the people during those early times is vividly pictured in these ancient tales. Several versions of the same story no doubt existed, and the case of Gideon illustrates the blending of two of them while the victory of Deborah and Barak is told in prose in ch. 4 and in poetry in ch. 5. This poem is perhaps the oldest in the Bible and in spite of an imperfect text is one of the finest in all literature.

Its

Literary
Value

Read it carefully: the introduction, vs. 2, 3, the coming from Mount Seir of Jehovah on the scene vs. 4, 5, the conditions before the war, vs. 6-10, the rally around Deborah and Barak, vs. 11-15a, the cowardly tribes that stayed at home, 15b-17, the brave tribes that came to the front, v. 18, the battle, vs. 19-22; the curse on the people of one town who did not intercept the fleeing foe v. 23, the eulogy of the woman who slew the Canaanite leader, vs. 24-31, the terrible disappointment awaiting the Canaanites, vs. 28-30, and the triumphant conclusion, v. 31.

It should be noted that these ancient stories and poems were not composed with any thought that they would become part of a collection of books regarded as a revelation from God. Yet they bear their own witness that they are genuine pictures of the *developing life of the people* through whom mankind has received the supreme revelation from God. They show us the working of influences and forces guided by him to train spiritual eyes to see and know him.

The moral standards of Christianity are far higher than those of the times of the Judges or of the author of this book. The treacherous deed of Jael, 4:17-21, would not now warrant the tribute in 5:24-27. Gideon is not in all respects an ideal hero, 8:18-21,

29-32. The crowning act of Jephthah as a tribute to God for his deliverance is utterly revolting to us, 11:30, 31, 39. Samson is an immoral character whose physical strength and wit gave popularity to the stories about him.

But the essence of the religion of these primitive Hebrews was *loyalty to Jehovah*, expressed in ways which they thought pleasing to him. Through that loyalty the nation was led by him into the religion of *love, mercy and duty* which was revealed through later prophets inspired by him.

V

THE BOOK OF SAMUEL

THE two books called Samuel were one in the Hebrew Bible. The title was evidently given to it because it was the name of the most prominent person in the first sixteen chapters. Samuel has been called its author, but this was impossible, 1 Sam. 25:1.

The period of Hebrew history covered by this book is approximately a century, *from about 1070 to 970 B. C.* The first exact date known in Hebrew history is 854 B. C., when an inscription by Shalmaneser II records that Ahab was among the kings defeated by him at the battle of Karkar. This book traces the course of progress of the Hebrews *from a loose conglomeration of tribes, sometimes warring against one another, to a united nation* under King David.

The contents may be divided as follows: 1 Sam. chs. 1-7; Samuel as a child in the tabernacle, 1:24, prophet 3:20, 21, judge 7:6, and priest 7:10. Chs. 8-15, the rise of the monarchy with Saul; chs. 16-31, the career of

David to the death of Saul. 2 Sam. chs. 1-4, David, king of Judah; chs. 5-20, David, king of all Israel. Chs. 21-24, an appendix, which includes two stories belonging in the early part of David's reign, 21:1-14; 24:1-25; two psalms, ch. 22 (compare Psalm 18); 23:1-7, called the farewell words of David, and two lists of his heroes and their deeds, 21:15-22; 23:8-39.

It is evident that at least *two distinct histories* are *combined*, and that they both extend as far as the end of 2 Sam. ch. 8. A few illustrations will suffice to show the diverse sources. 1 Sam. ch. 8 gives the view of a writer opposed to the establishment of a monarchy; 9:1-17 gives the view of one who favors it. Compare the two accounts of the introduction of David to Saul, 16:17-22, and 17:31-37, 55-58; of the rejection of Saul, 13:8-15 and 15:1-35; and of David sparing Saul in chs. 24 and 26. Various documents written at different times have been brought together with modifications and additions by editors through successive ages till after the exile. These documents included an ancient biography of Saul, another of David, probably another of Samuel with miscellaneous materials.

The book is the product of men living through an extended period of Hebrew history, as the Psalms are the product of a long period of relig-

ious experience, and the Proverbs of many generations of practical observation of the conduct of life. Its *character studies* of Samuel, Saul, David and other heroes are *unrivalled* in literature. We see them as they lived. Samuel the seer, moving from district to district, greeted with awe and expectancy, Saul the splendid yet moody and jealous chief, David the winsome boy, the brave warrior, the idol of his followers, the religious enthusiast capable of the noblest and also most dastardly deeds — when these biographic pictures are seen separated from the interpretations or additions of editors, they live with inexhaustible vitality.

This book is a record of the *religious progress of Israel* under the leadership of early priests and prophets. The age of Saul and David was brutal and the Hebrew people and kindred tribes believed that their gods were appeased by cruel acts often inflicted on innocent persons. Such an act was David's bloody sacrifice of seven of the brothers of Jonathan, five of them children of his first wife or her sister, 2 Sam. 21:1-14. But David's treatment of Jonathan himself is a story of noble friendship unsurpassed in history. The ethical interest rises to its climax in the message of the prophet Nathan to David, 2 Sam. 12:1-15, and the Nemesis that from that time to his death haunted his reign.

This book is the record of the progress of Israel, the people of Jehovah, from a race of hunted peasants to a united nation ruling the land from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates.

VI

THE BOOK OF KINGS

THE authorship of the book of Kings has been indicated in the study of the book of Samuel.

The Authors It is one book in the Hebrew, is a continuation of Samuel without any line of division, and is edited in the same spirit.

The history extends over about 400 years: the appointment of Solomon as successor of David, and his reign, chs. 1-11; his **Contents** tory of the two kingdoms from the division at the death of Solomon to the final destruction of Israel, 1 Kings, ch. 12, 2 Kings ch. 17; the history of Judah from the capture of Samaria by Shalmaneser IV and Sargon, kings of Assyria, 722 B. C., to the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, 586 B. C. and at least twenty-five years after, 2 Kings 25:27-30.

Three books are cited as authorities: 1 Kings 11:41; 14:19; 15:31, etc; 14:29; 15:7, 23, etc. **Its Com-** Other works no doubt were in part incorporated, such as popular collections of stories of Elijah and Elisha, chronicles of the

northern and southern kingdoms, perhaps a biography of Isaiah, and official documents.

The aim of the author is to give the history of both nations, measuring the time of each reign in one kingdom by the contemporaneous reign in the other. The name of each king is given, the name of his mother or father, the length of his reign and his death. In most cases also some chief events during his reign are mentioned and an opinion is recorded concerning his character, *e.g.* 1 Kings 15:1-8.

Its purpose is the same as that of the other Former Prophets, Joshua, Judges and Samuel, *to enforce the duty of obedience to Jehovah.* But this purpose is much more prominent and definite than in the preceding books. Laws of Jehovah had been promulgated which were not known when the materials of the other books were produced. For example, worship and sacrifice to Jehovah on certain high places made sacred by long use for that purpose were regarded as lawful and right up to the time of Josiah. The greatest heroes of the nation offered worship at these places for which they received special tokens of divine favor, such as Solomon at Gibeah, 1 Kings 3:4 ff. and Elijah at Carmel, 1 Kings 18:31-40. But the book of Deuteronomy, adopted as Jehovah's law during the reign of Josiah, aimed to concentrate all

public worship around the temple at Jerusalem. All the other sanctuaries were condemned by it, Deut. 12:1-14.

The book of Kings was edited in sympathy with that law. Therefore in it kings are rated for
 Its excellence according to their treatment
 Estimate of these high places. The great sin of
 of Kings Jeroboam, the founder of the northern kingdom, was his establishment of worship at the two ancient high places, Bethel and Dan, 1 Kings 12:29-31. The condemnation of that act stretches over the whole history of Israel, 1 Kings 16:2, 19, 26, 31, etc. Hezekiah, 2 Kings 18:2-6, and Josiah, 2 Kings 23:8, 15, 2 Chron. 35:25-27 were great because they abolished the ancient sanctuaries. Asa, Jehoshaphat, Jehoash and Amaziah were good kings but not altogether perfect, because they did not take away the high places, 1 Kings 15:14, 22:43, 2 Kings 12:2, 3; 14:3, 4.

As an example of the biographies and the purpose of recording them read 1 Kings 22:41-50. Note that here as in other places no detailed reasons are given for the judgment passed on the king, but it is intimated that the judgment is warranted by material before the eyes of the author of the history to which his readers also had access, v. 45. The book of Kings is rather of the nature of a sermon than a history.

Facts of history are used to show that the worship of Jehovah at the temple in Jerusalem was the one object of supreme importance. The work of kings and the movements of the nation are measured with reference to this object. Israel according to the compiler of Kings was destroyed because of neglect of this worship, 2 Kings 17:16-18. This purpose determined what facts were to be given and how they were to be told.

Yet this book furnishes us in connection with the books of the prophets almost all the light we have on the history of Israel for four centuries. We shall refer to it frequently in connection with our study of the prophets. For that reason a more detailed analysis of the book is not here given.

VII

THE LATTER PROPHETS

IN ch. 2 of Part II the function of the Hebrew prophets was briefly described, and the purpose of the historical books of the second library of the Covenant. These are Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings. Their authors make use of the *history* of the Hebrews *for religious instruction* concerning the character of God and men's duties to him. The remaining four books of this library are in the main direct *appeals to rulers and people* to influence their conduct in crises of history.

The distinctive character of the books of the Latter Prophets is found in the fact that they
Their are mainly *sermons and addresses*, often
Literary in poetic form, sometimes joined to-
Character gether by brief accounts of their authors and of the conditions in which they spoke. They express also the deeper experiences not only of individuals but of the nation. While they are prompted by occasions and deal chiefly with their own times, they rest on *fundamental principles*, truths concerning God and men and their relations with one another abiding in all ages.

They have been vaguely understood by most readers of the Bible until recent years, because the historic conditions which make their sayings intelligible have been little known. But the nature and effect of their teachings have clearly demonstrated that they were "men who spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit," 2 Pet. 1:21.

No writings of prophets are found in the second library earlier than the time of the division of the kingdom. But the *spirit of prophecy* appeared in the *earliest life* of the Hebrews. Moses and Aaron were prophets of God, Ex. 4:10-15; 7:1. There were many prophets in the camp of the Israelites in their wanderings, Num. 11:25-29.

The time of Samuel was the beginning of a *new prophetic era*, Acts 3:24. When he entered on his mission genuine prophecies were rare, 1 Sam. 3:1. But the number of prophets increased and they formed bands or guilds, 1 Sam. 10:5, 6; 19:20. Sometimes they were employed as *fortune tellers* and received fees for their services. 1 Sam. 9:5-10; 1 Kings 14:1-4. Sometimes they used *music* as a means of kindling inspiration. 1 Sam. 10:5; 2 Kings 3:14, 15; 1 Chron. 25:3. In process of time prophets of Jehovah came to be recognized as receiving from him special knowledge, and as *trustworthy guides* for kings and people.

They were a class by themselves, highly honored in the Hebrew community. They were probably as numerous at some periods as clergy-men are in our day. David had several at his court, of whom Nathan and Gad are named. Ahab had 400 whom he could call in for counsel, 1 Kings 22:5, 6. Sometimes they did not agree in the advice they gave, 1 Kings 22:11, 12, 23, 24. Most of those whose careers are told in the Bible, from Elijah to John the Baptist, were men opposed to current beliefs, who suffered much because of their loyalty to their convictions.

The mission of the Hebrew Prophets was to represent the will of Jehovah to men. They were speakers for God, taught and commissioned by him, and their work was unique in the history of mankind. *They revolutionized the religion of Israel.*

Elijah is the noblest illustration of the earlier prophets, "a mighty man of God." His name which meant "Jehovah is my God," was a challenge, as if he would say, "Who is your god?" Read 1 Kings chs. 17-19, 21.

To the prophets we are indebted for the Bible. They kept the annals and *wrote the histories* of the nation. 1 Chron. 29:29. But especially they were the *creators*, as Jehovah's representatives, of *true and high ideals*, with a holy passion to realize them.)

They brought to men a new era of ethical purity and social justice, an era of constructive religious thinking perhaps unsurpassed in the history of the world. The proof of this is to be found in the results of their work increasing through the ages. (Their teachings are the *foundations of the faith* of the Christian world to-day.)

The sermons of the prophets were perhaps as frequently preserved and read as those of ministers in our time, though only in manuscript. But the collections of these sermons in the library of the Covenant are the *sifted product* of more than *five centuries*, a period as long as the entire history of the growth of English literature.

In the four collections we are now to examine, the names of fourteen prophets are preserved as preachers of the sermons, and there are brief sketches of the characters and careers of some of them. Of some, however, we know only the names, and several of the sermons are by preachers whose names are unknown.

VIII

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

THE book of Isaiah is not the oldest in the collection of the Latter Prophets. It is put first in our study because Isaiah is *the* central figure of prophecy, because the sayings collected under his name extend through several centuries, and because it ranks first in grandeur of themes, profound insight, majesty of diction and splendor of imagery.

On the first examination *three sections* of the book are noted. The first, chs. 1-35, belongs mainly to a period in the history of the kingdom of Judah during four reigns, 1:1. The second is probably an extract from a biography of Isaiah which was also incorporated into the book of Kings. Compare Isa. chs. 36-39 with 2 Kings 18:13-20:19. The third section is a collection of addresses to the Jews near the close of their captivity in Babylon, chs. 40-55, and some seventy years and more after that time, chs. 56-66.

Note that these addresses as reported are *brief*

abstracts, with great themes on great occasions. The overthrow of the Assyrians is an example, **Distinctive** 17:12-14. Note the seven sermons **Features** against seven sins; covetousness for land, 5:8-10; drinking and dissipation, 5:11-17; contempt for God, 5:18, 19; moral perversion 5:20; self-confidence, 5:21; civic corruption, 5:22, 23; oppression with unjust legislation, 10:1, 2.

Sometimes one brief abstract is the only record preserved for an entire year, *e.g.* the warning to the Philistines, 14:28-32. Yet these abstracts are usually *in poetic form*, and appear to have been spoken by the prophet and afterward written by himself or by his disciples, 8:16; 30:8.

They are *not in chronological order*, *e.g.* Isaiah's call and commission would naturally be placed first, 6:1-13.

The *chapter divisions* are *arbitrary*, sometimes separating an address into two portions, *e.g.* the poem on the Doom of Israel has four stanzas, the first beginning with 9:8, each ending with the same refrain, "For all this his anger is not turned away," etc., 9:12, 17, 21; 10:4. Apparently also one stanza of this poem was inserted in ch. 5:24, 25.

These great prophecies can be understood only imperfectly apart from the history out of which they sprang. A map is indispensable, in-

cluding the principal countries of the ancient world. Locate *Israel* and *Judah* with *Philistia* Political and other small nations, along and near Conditions the Mediterranean coast, *Syria* to the north and *Assyria* beyond the Euphrates River to the northeast. Then note *Egypt* to the southwest, and that between Assyria and Egypt, almost always fighting each other, along the road on which their armies must pass to and fro, lay Israel and Judah and the neighboring little kingdoms, alternately the prey of the one or the other.

Study a history of the period from the beginning of the reign of Shalmaneser II over Assyria, 860 B. C., to the downfall of that empire, 607 B. C. Isaiah's public career extended from about 740 to 701 B. C. Read 2 Kings, chs. 15-21, 2 Chron. chs. 26-33. Read also the prophecies of the invasion of Judah by Assyria, Isa. 8:5-8; the doom of the Assyrian, 10:5-34; the doom of Egypt 19:1-15; the folly of Judah making alliance with Egypt, 20:1-6; 28:14-22; 30:1-17; 31:1-4. These passages illustrate perils to which Judah was exposed from both Assyria and Egypt, and Isaiah's efforts to save his country from both.

Judah had been *very prosperous* under Uzziah, The Moral 2 Chron. 26:6-15. But with prosper- and Social ity came *oppression* of the poor by Conditions the rich, 3:15; 5:8; gross *injustice* by rulers, 1:21-23, the growth of *drunkenness*

among the upper classes, 5:11, 12; 28:7, 8; crass materialism and *idolatry*, 2:6-8. Alongside of these conditions an *ostentatious piety* flourished, with many offerings of animals in sacrifice, abundant prayers, 2:11-15, and constant indifference to common honesty and kindness, 5:7.

No nobler character appears in the Hebrew Scriptures than this prophet. He was a man of Isaiah as *impressive personality*, of *high social position*, a companion and counselor of kings. His leading characteristics are brought out in his account of his call to the prophetic office: his *steadfast confidence* in the sovereignty, holiness and covenant-keeping faithfulness of Jehovah, 6:1-13. He saw God, saw his great world plan, and in the midst of tumults and terrors stood unshaken and serene, 7:9; 28:16; 30:15.

His style is *nobly human*, and will greatly repay study for its literary qualities, while the preacher's acquaintance with every phase of life must have brought him into *close contact with all classes* of hearers. He understood the habits of birds, 16:2; 31:5; 38:14; of hunted animals, 13:14, and of those in domestic service, 1:3. He was familiar with the growth of trees, 7:2; 10:19; 11:1. He was at home with the carpenter at his work, the builder, the farmer, the vinedresser. Nor was he less at home with statesmen and kings.

his writings his description of A Day of Divine Judgment, 2:12-21, of the coming of the Assyrian Army, 5:26-29, and of the desolation following its coming, 7:18-25.

The collection, chs. 1-35, is a book by itself with chs. 36-39 as an appendix. Separate addresses and collections of addresses were probably in circulation before the first they were brought together. The Collection teaching referred to in 8:16 must have been before Isaiah had completed his mission. This may account for their lack of chronological arrangement, which is like the collected poems of Wordsworth.

A general division which may be a help to the study of the book is as follows:

Chs. 1-12, Addresses concerning Jerusalem, Judah and Israel.

Chs. 13-23, Addresses concerning foreign nations, some of later date than Isaiah's time.

Chs. 28-33, Addresses concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

Chs. 24-27, Prophecies concerning the issue of some great world catastrophe.

Chs. 34, 35, Pictures of judgment and restoration, forming a conclusion to the whole collection.

The last two sections belong to a period many years, perhaps several centuries, after the time of Isaiah.

The great landmarks of Isaiah's prophecies are four Assyrian invasions of Palestine; by Tiglath-Pileser II, 734-732 B. C.; by Shalmaneser IV, 725-720; by Sargon, 712-710; by Senacherib, 701.

IX

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH (*Continued*)

ONLY a superficial examination is necessary to discover that the latter portions of the book of Additional Isaiah are widely separated in time and Collections character from the earlier. In chs. 1-39 the dreaded enemy of Judah is *Assyria*, 7:17-20; 8:5-8 etc.; in chs. 40-55, *Babylon* is the great empire and the Jews are held there in captivity. When Isaiah prophesied, 740-701 B. C., Assyria was making successive invasions into Palestine. That empire disappeared with the destruction of Nineveh, its capital 607 B. C. Chs. 40-55 have to do with the return of the Jews to Jerusalem through the favor of Cyrus king of Babylon, 538 B. C., about *two centuries after Isaiah* began to preach.

The addresses of the first section were *uttered in Jerusalem* or in close relation to it, 3:1; 5:3; 7:3 etc. In the latter section *Jerusalem is destroyed* or is far distant, 44:26, 28; 49:14-20. The style of the earlier chapters is abrupt, the sentences brief, the messages urgent; the style of the later chapters is deliberate and flowing.

The prevailing tone of the earlier messages was of *warning and doom*: of the later, *comfort, promise and encouragement*. Compare 9:14–19 with 40:1–5.

The announcement of Israel's deliverance begins with the wooing note, 40:1, 2, the call from the wilderness that Jehovah is going to march at the head of his people from Babylon to Jerusalem, that the way is being prepared, 40:3–5, and that while human plans are transient and disappear, the world plan of God is eternal, vs. 6–8. The first section, chs. 40–48, ends with the declaration that Jehovah has redeemed his people, 48:17, and with the summons to go forth from Babylon at once under his leadership, 48:20–22.

Chs. 49–55 tell of *the restoration of Israel* through many discouragements by the power of Jehovah in her own land, and her final glorious triumph, ending with the promise that all nature will rejoice with her as she begins her march across the desert, 55:12, 13.

Two topics dominate the entire collection, and their significance lies in their relations to God's *world plan of redemption*. The first is *Cyrus*. Study a history of his career. He was about to send the people of Jehovah back to Jerusalem. He is most highly praised by the prophet. But he, the mighty ruler of the world empire of Babylon, was only an instru-

ment in the hands of Jehovah, who raised him up from the East to accomplish his divine purpose, 41:1-6. Cyrus would cause the rebuilding of Jerusalem because Jehovah had said of him "He shall perform all my pleasure," etc., 44:28. Jehovah had made Cyrus his Messiah, 45:1, to break open the brazen gates of Babylon and seize her treasures, 45:2, 3. Cyrus is to be the great deliverer of Israel from Babylon, 45:13, "He whom Jehovah loveth," 48:14, 15.

The other main topic is the *Servant*, who represents the *ideal Israel*, 41:8. It is for the Servant's sake that Jehovah has equipped Cyrus to overthrow Babylon, 45:4-6. The Servant is delivered from captivity that he may bring the religion of Jehovah to the whole world, 53:11.

The high task of the Servant is described in *four poems*. The first poem, 42:1-4 describes *his equipment and methods*. The second, *The Mission of Ideal Israel* in which the Servant is represented as speaking, describes *his mission*, which is to restore "the preserved of Israel" in order to the salvation of all nations, 49:1-6. The third sets forth his *testing* through endurance of suffering, 50:4-9. Note that the editor or collector of these poems uses this one to encourage the faithful and warn the ungodly of his own day, vs. 10, 11. The fourth depicts the Servant's *humiliation and ultimate exaltation*, 52:13-53:12.

This is the climax of the four poems, and one of the noblest passages in the books of the Old Covenant.

Thus *the high destiny* of the ideal Israel is interpreted, to give salvation to the world through toil, suffering and death for others, issuing in ultimate resurrection and everlasting glory. No nation as such ever achieved this destiny. But Jesus, the offspring of the nation, the Messiah of Jehovah, has fulfilled this mission, and his disciples who interpreted it saw in these great poems the foreshadowing of his suffering, toil and final victory, Matt. 12:15-21. Acts 3:13; 8:32-35.

The latest collection, chs. 56-66, brings before us very different social conditions from the preceding chapters. *Two opposing parties* appear within Israel. Blessing and cursing crowd one another. Read, *e.g.* ch. 56:6-12. The first three verses are an encouragement to proselytes who obey Jewish laws, especially the Sabbath. The last four verses, 9-12, are an almost vituperative address to Jewish pastors, comparing them to wild beasts and selfish, greedy, avaricious sheep dogs, false to their trust.

These chapters seem to be a collection of *reform sermons* preached at different times and by different persons, chs. 56-59, apparently belonging

to the period of Ezra and Nehemiah. The section, chs. 60-62, is a rhapsody of Zion Redeemed; 63:1-6 is a song of Jehovah triumphing over the enemies of Zion; 63:7-64:12 is a prayer in words of tremendous passion for Jehovah's favor to suffering Israel; and the remaining two chapters describe the blessedness of the faithful and the doom of apostates. The whole section, chs. 40-66, has been arranged by an editor as a triptich, each of the three parts ending with the same refrain, 48:22; 57:21; 66:24 (the last one expanded).

Passages separated from their context and their historical associations are used with power by preachers and teachers and are precious for devotional uses. But the sayings of these Prophecies collected in this book, when interpreted in their historic relations, are unsurpassed by any in the books of the Old Covenant as appeals to the conscience in our own time.

X

THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

THE book of Jeremiah is a mingling of history, biography, prayer and sermon. In its record of vicarious sufferings freely and nobly borne in behalf of the nation, in its deep human interest, in its sublime faith in the ultimate restoration of Israel and the establishment of the everlasting Kingdom of God, it stands by itself in the library of the Old Covenant, prefiguring the New Covenant and the Christ as its Mediator.

The first step in understanding the book of Jeremiah is to gain a knowledge of *the period* during which it was produced and of *the conditions* which called it forth. Josiah became king of Judah in 639 B. C., when he was eight years old, 2 Kings 22:1. About twelve years later Jeremiah began his ministerial career and continued it to the destruction of the temple and of Jerusalem, 586 B. C., Jeremiah 1:1-3; 52:12.

The Biblical *record of this half century*, the most

tragic in the history of Judah, is in 2 Kings, chs. 22-25, and 2 Chron. chs. 34-36. It included the discovery of the book of the Law, in substance the book of Deuteronomy, 621 B. C., and the reformation that followed, the death of Josiah at the battle of Megiddo, 609 B. C., the destruction of Nineveh and the fall of the Assyrian Empire, 607 B. C., the three months' reign of Jehoahaz, the brother of Josiah, the reigns of Jehoiakim, another brother, and of his son Coniah, then of another brother, Zedekiah, to the end of the nation.

The death of Josiah was *the most tragic event* in Hebrew History. Under Jehoiakim the national control passed again to the half-heathenish party that had been suppressed by the reformation of Josiah. The party that professed to follow Jehovah blindly trusted their interpretation of the prophecy of Isaiah, 14:32, that the temple could not be destroyed, Jer. 7:4. Jehoiakim's revolt against Babylon led to the looting of the temple and the captivity of the leaders of the nation, 2 Kings 24:13-17, and the foolish rebellion of Zedekiah brought about the final destruction of the temple and city. Fill in this outline of history and you will be prepared to study the book of Jeremiah, Jer. 52:12-19.

The prophet himself is *the most important factor* in interpreting his sayings. He has revealed

himself in his writings more fully than any other prophet. Study his account of his call to the **Jeremiah** prophetic office, 1:4-10; his intense suffering because he could not deliver his fellow countrymen from their perils, 4:19, 22; 9:1, 2; his homelessness because of his mission, 16:2, which shadowed his daily life with gloom, 16:9; 25:10; 33:10; his abhorrence of his fellow prophets because of their unfaithfulness, 23:9; his discovery of the treachery toward him of the people of his native town, 11:18-23; his resentment at the outrage inflicted on him by the chief officer of the temple, 20:1, 2, which moved him to remonstrate with Jehovah who had called him to preach, vs. 7-11, and to curse the day of his birth, vs. 14-18. He was a *martyr*, not only in death, but through a long ministry of over forty years, standing alone to witness against a people whom he passionately loved, 15:17-20.

The prophecies may be divided as belonging to four periods. The first were delivered in his **Analysis of** youthful ministry. To this period belong the **Book** long chs. 2-6. Read his remonstrance with the people for their entangling alliances with Egypt and with Assyria, 2:11-28; his warning of the approach of the Scythian armies of the north, 4:5-18, his impressions on his first acquaintance with Jerusalem, 5:1-13.

The second period was that of Josiah's refor-

mation, when he proclaimed the laws of the newly discovered book of the Covenant, 11:1-8. It is probable that the sermons of this period have not been preserved, since the prevailing tone of what we have is denunciation, and therefore what would now be most highly valued of Jeremiah's preaching may have been lost.

The third period began with the death of Josiah followed by the collapse of the reform movement. To this period belongs the great sermon, 7:1-8:3, addressed to the party that relied on assurances that the temple could not be destroyed. This sermon was denounced by prophets and priests as sacrilegious, and nearly cost Jeremiah his life, ch. 26.

The fourth period extends from the near approach of the final catastrophe of the fall of Jerusalem, to the end of the prophet's ministry. He saw that the political life of the nation had ceased; and his faith rose to the confident expectation of restored spiritual life to the people of God. The old national Covenant was passing away forever, but he foresaw a new Covenant to be made by God with each believer in him. Read ch. 31, especially vs. 31-34. This, the fruit of Jeremiah's long and bitter experience, was *his greatest contribution* to his people and to mankind. It is the truth which Jesus made the foundation of his everlasting kingdom, Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25; Heb. 8:7-13.

The forms of prophecy in Jeremiah's preaching were deeply impressive and often startling. Read Jeremiah's *e.g.* the brief poem describing the desolation of war, 4:23-25, and the one **Preaching** on God's tests and rewards, 17:5-11. Study his illustrated sermons: the potter at work, 18:1-17, the reception of the sermon by the leaders, v. 18, and Jeremiah's prayer for vengeance on them, vs. 19-23. Compare with Christ's parable, Matt. 21:33-46. Other examples are the linen girdle, Jer. 13:1-11, and the broken bottle, 19:1-15. A similar method of preaching by symbols was Jeremiah's use of the yoke which was broken in a dispute with another prophet, ch. 28, his purchase of land from his cousin in his native town, 32:7-15, and his offer of wine to the Rechabites, ch. 35.

The book of Jeremiah has passed through various stages. The first collection of his sermons **The Structure** was written by Baruch, from his dictation twenty-three years after his ministry opened, 36:1-4. It was short, for it was read and repeated several times the same day, 36:10, 13, 15, 20, 21. That copy was destroyed by king Jehoiakim, 36:21-23. A new and much enlarged edition was produced not long afterwards, 36:27, 28, 32.

The narrative portions in which Jeremiah is spoken of in the third person were probably

added by Baruch, *e.g.* chs. 36-39. Ch. 52 is copied from 2 Kings 24:18-25:30. The story of the final event in the fall of Jerusalem is also repeated in shorter form in Jer. 38:1-10. The book in our Bible contains a number of collections which probably were once circulated separately. The Greek translation of Jeremiah, in the Septuagint, from a Hebrew manuscript more than a thousand years older than those from which our Bible was translated, is shorter by about 2700 words than our book of Jeremiah. Revisions and additions to it evidently continued to be made for several centuries after the death of the prophet.

The value of the book lies especially in its revelation of the relations between God and the individual man. The Covenant of Je-
 Its individual man. The Covenant of Je-
 Religious hovah was with the nation. But the
 Value new Covenant was to be established,
 Jeremiah proclaimed, between God and each soul accepting it. The knowledge of God and of his Covenant was to be imparted not through written records only or mainly but through the Spirit of God in contact with the spirit of man through personal experience. 31:31-34.

These principles are fundamental to all true religion. In making them known Jeremiah prepared the way for the coming of the Christ and Christianity.

XI

THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

THE place of Ezekiel in Hebrew history gives to his writings exceptional importance. The kingdom of Judah was vanishing. It was the last organized remnant of the glorious kingdom of David of which the chosen people had long cherished the promise of Jehovah that it should be everlasting. The condition of the fulfilment of that promise of the Covenant was that the Hebrew nation should be loyal to Jehovah. The people had been trained to be loyal to the nation. Now that the nation had failed in its part of the Covenant, the great advance in the evolution of the Hebrew religion was to be made by which *the individual should come into Covenant relation* with his God.

Jeremiah had foreshadowed that relation, 31:31-34. The great unknown prophet of the exile, Isa. chs. 40-55, had not yet spoken. Ezekiel was the connecting link between the old teaching and the new experience.

It was the conviction of the Hebrew historian that because of the long, wicked reign of Manasseh the Jehovah had determined to destroy the kingdom of Judah, 2 Kings 23:26, 27. **The Political Situation** The folly of Josiah's successors confirmed this determination. The king of Egypt carried away one of Josiah's sons, and enthroned another son in his place, 2 Kings 23:31-34, who went down before the army of the king of Babylon 2 Kings 24:1-4. A few months afterward the army entered Jerusalem, plundered the temple, and carried away its treasures. With these also the choicest of all the citizens of Judah were taken to Babylonia, 2 Kings 24:10-16. That was in 597 B. C. Those left behind were a worthless and miserable company. Jeremiah compared the former to a basket of good figs, the latter to wormy and rotten figs, Jer. 24:1-10.

The Prophet Ezekiel was among the first company of captives. He was a *priest* of an aristocratic family, 1:3, and in Babylonia the Author he lived in his own house, 3:24, at a place called Tel-abib, 3:15, on the bank of a great canal, 1:1. It was in the fifth year of his exile, 1:2, that he began to preach, and his ministry continued more than twenty years (compare 1:2 with 29:17). At first his preaching was regarded with contempt by his fellow exiles, 3:7. But as his predictions, especially of the final

overthrow of Jerusalem, came to be fulfilled, *he won their respect and confidence* and the leaders used to come to him for counsel, 8:1; 14:1; 20:1, though they often did not follow it, 33:30-33.

He began his work, like Isaiah, with a most impressive vision of God. Compare Isa. 6:1-8 with Ezek. 1:4-2:2. Like Isaiah, his mission was most discouraging. Compare Isa. 6:9-13 with Ezekiel 2:3-7. Note that his account of his call is voluminous and repetitious as compared with that of Isaiah.

The people to whom the prophet ministered being divided into two parts, the best in Babylon and the remainder in Judah, he addressed both, and probably some of his sermons were circulated as tracts in Jerusalem. While he regarded the exiles more favorably than the others, 14:21-23, *he condemned the whole nation* in its entire history, 20:5-39, and its present condition, though with bitter regret, 21:1-7.

But he regarded himself as the *pastor* of the whole people, a relation new in Israel. He felt responsible for *warning and guiding each soul*, 3:17-21. Before the final catastrophe he predicted the end of the state, city and temple, 5:5-17; 7:5-9; 12:17-20, etc. After the destruction of Jerusalem he exerted his powerful influence to lead the captives to adopt a new religious point of view, and as individuals, holding and

cultivating the sense of personal responsibility to God, to organize themselves into a *religious community*, for which he proposed elaborate plans.

The prophet's method of preaching was *sensational*. He revels in imagery. We find in him His the beginnings of Jewish apocalyptic Method literature, see Part I, ch. 2, paragraph 2. His acted sermons were startling, and seem to us grotesque until we become acquainted with the character of his times and people. He ate the book containing God's message, that it might become incorporated into his own personality, 2:8-3:3. Note his drawing a picture on a tile of the siege of Jerusalem, lying on his left side 390 days, then forty days on his right side, 4:4-8, eating filthy food, 4:9-17, cutting off his hair and beard and dividing it into three parts, 5:1-12, his smiting with his hand and stamping with his foot, 6:11, his spectacular moving of his furniture, 12:1-7, etc. His illustrations are so vivid that they cannot be forgotten, such as comparing Israel and Judah to two sisters who were prostitutes, 23:1-49, and Jerusalem to a rusty cooking-pot, 24:1-14, and his vision of the dry bones made into living human beings, 37:1-14.

The book is divided into *two sections*. The first twenty-four chapters are *denunciations of Judah* for her wickedness. When the siege of Jerusalem began, 24:1, 2, this series ended, and

the last twenty-four chapters are occupied with *messages of comfort and guidance* to the exiles.

The Chs. 25–32 are dooms pronounced on the
Analysis of nations that had afflicted Judah; chs.
the Book 33–39 contain mainly promises of deliverance chapters for her, and chs. 40–48 give minute descriptions of an ideal city and temple for the nation after its restoration to its own land.

Ezekiel's writings are of great value for the knowledge they give of the transition period from Hebraism to Judaism, the period of the exile. They contain impressive utterances, which *apply to conditions paralleled in our own times*, where agnosticism and skepticism go hand in hand with social corruption and false prophets proclaim that piety apart from righteousness is acceptable to God. They bring light and comfort to genuine patriots, to men and women faithful to God amid surrounding temptations and discouragements, and confident of his final victory over evil. They have a distinct and important place in the history of the evolution of the Kingdom of God, in the revelation of its principles, its ideal and its certain coming. The faithful student of Ezekiel will discover in his prophecies a rich storehouse of great ethical and religious truths.

XII

THE BOOK OF THE TWELVE

THE second Hebrew library consists of eight books. Four of these are called the Former Prophets. Of the remaining four, called **The Twelve Prophets in One Book** the Latter Prophets, three have been considered in the last four chapters, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel. The last book in the list in the second library was called The Twelve. It included *twelve collections* of documents, the most of them ascribed to prophets who are named. Of some of these we know nothing except the names. Most of the materials are abstracts of addresses. Some historical matter is added as an aid to interpretation, and one book, Jonah, is a story with no author assigned, like the stories of Ruth and Esther.

The fact that they have always been placed together in Hebrew, Greek and Latin collections of the Sacred Scriptures indicates that they were a *collection by themselves* before they were admitted into the second library. Greek Jews

and Christians of early times knew them as the Twelve Prophets, Latins as the Minor Prophets, because the portion ascribed to each was brief in comparison to those of the three Major Prophets. That title, however, is unfortunate because misleading. The Twelve is *not a less important book* than the others in this library.

The sermons collected under the name of Isaiah extended through nearly the entire prophetic period, from 740 B. C. to near the close of the second library, about 300 B.C. But the collection under the name of The Twelve begins a few years earlier and covers the whole period of written prophecy. To the *eighth century* B. C. belong *Amos, Hosea and Micah*, all living in the time of Isaiah. This was the Assyrian period of Hebrew history. Of the *seventh century* are *Zephaniah, Nahum and Habakkuk*, who were living during part of the life of Jeremiah and perhaps of Ezekiel. This was the Babylonian period. It extended into the *sixth century* and in it is *Obadiah* as a prophet of the exile. *Haggai* and *Zechariah* were prophets of Jerusalem after the return from the exile, *Malachi* and *Joel* in the *century following*. This was the Persian period. To the Greek period, which began in 332, are to be assigned the last six chapters of *Zechariah* and the book of *Jonah*.

The correct interpretation of the prophets

depends on knowledge of the times and the historical circumstances in which they preached. **Political Conditions** The student needs to know to some extent how political parties, religious sects, social divisions and the relations of their nation with other kingdoms influenced their prophets' utterances. In any case he is likely to consider these sayings as wholly apart from the life of the present day. It is well, therefore, in studying the prophets, to study the movements going on in a modern oriental monarchy such as Turkey or China, as an aid in interpreting the preaching during the Hebrew monarchy.

What is the message of the twelve to our time? Principal G. A. Smith of the University of Aberdeen offers this excellent answer: .

“Impetuous cataracts of righteousness; the irrepressible love of God to sinful men; the perseverance and pursuits of his grace; **The Message to Us** his mercies that follow the exile and the outcast; his truth that goes forth richly upon the heathen; the hope of the Saviour of mankind; the outpouring of the Spirit; counsels of patience; impulses of tenderness and healing; methods innumerable — all sprang from these lower hills of prophecy, and sprang so strongly that the world hears and feels them still.”

XIII

THREE EIGHTH CENTURY PROPHETS

THE BOOK OF AMOS

THE first collection of sermons in the Book of the Twelve bears as its title, "The Words of Title, Date Amos." This little book of 146 verses is and Place *the oldest book* in the Bible. It is dated "two years before the earthquake." Centuries later there were memories among the Jews of an earthquake in Uzziah's time, Zech. 14:5. Not long after Amos spoke, Isaiah seems to have had it in mind, Isa. 29:6. There are frequent allusions to it in the words of Amos, 3:15; 4:11; 6:11. But we cannot locate the year of the earthquake. It occurred, however, *when Uzziah ruled in Judah* and his contemporary Jeroboam II in Israel, 1:1, and the place where Amos preached was *Bethel*, 7:13. We may assume, then, that the ten or more sermons here summarized were preached about the year 755 B. C.

The time was only about forty years after the death of the prophet Elisha. But during those years a great change had passed over Israel.

She was no longer exposed to such raids from neighboring nations as those of the king of Syria, against which Elisha warned his king, *2 Kings* 6:9. The *borders of Israel* under Jeroboam II, and of Judah under Uzziah had been greatly extended. A little kingdom of fighting husbandmen had expanded into a flourishing nation with *a new civilization*. Agriculture flourished. Trade, internal and with foreign nations, grew. The people flocked into towns and cities, erected costly houses. The rich indulged in reckless extravagance and dissipation, *Amos* 3:12; 6:4-6. The rich women became sottish, 4:1. Oppression of the poor became intolerable, moral corruption a byword, priests used for wicked purposes the fines collected from others for sins, 2:6-8.

Yet worship of Jehovah had *never* before been *so costly* or so popular. *Pilgrimages* to sacred shrines, 5:5, abundance of *offerings* to Jehovah, 5:22, 25, 26, were the order of the day. But the piety of the people was divorced from righteousness, 5:21, 24. They sought shrines but not the righteous God, 4:4. The situation in Israel was only more fully developed in Judah when Isaiah prophesied a score of years later. See ch. 8 of Part II, under "political, moral and social conditions."

The preacher Amos came suddenly before the

people worshipping during a great autumn festival at Bethel, the most popular sanctuary of Israel, Amos the Prophet 7:13. He was a wool-grower who lived south of Jerusalem, and perhaps came to the market or annual fair at Bethel to sell his wares, 1:1. He had not pretended to be a prophet, but was *impelled* to speak to Israel by a *divine command*, 7:14, 15; 3:8. When he had been silenced and driven out of the kingdom, it was natural that he should return to his home and write what he could not preach. Hence Amos was the *first of the writing prophets*.

The prophet's messages are given in three sections:

1. Chs. 1, 2 pronounced *judgment on* six nations hostile to Israel; *Syria*, 1:3-5; *Philistia* vs. 6-8; *His Sermons* *Phoenicia*, vs. 9:10; *Edom*, vs. 11, 12; *Ammon*, vs. 13-15; and *Moab*, 2:1-3. The prophet's hearers would welcome those denunciations, but he followed them at once with judgments on *Judah*, vs. 4, 5, and on *Israel*, vs. 6-16.

2. Chs. 3-6 present the reasons for the judgment, summarized in 3:10, and the nature of it: war, 3:11, 12, earthquake, vs. 14, 15, captivity of women, 4:1-3, famine, v. 6, drought, vs. 7, 8, blight, v. 9, pestilence, v. 10. A dirge is used as a text, 5:1-3, for warnings and summons to seek Jehovah, with the alternative of being carried away captive to Assyria, 5:27; 6:7, 14.

3. Chs. 7-9 describe visions symbolizing the impending judgment — the locust plague, 7:1-3, drought like a great conflagration, vs. 4-6, the plumbline, vs. 7-9, the basket of summer fruit, 8:1-3, the Lord shaking the land with earthquake, 9:1. Each of these visions may have been the text for a sermon. The account of the visions is interrupted by the story of the preacher's expulsion from Bethel, 7:10-13, and his curse on the priest and the nation as he was leaving, 7:14-17. The last section, 9:8-15, holding out promise of restoration of Judah and Israel just after the unmitigated sentence of 9:1-5 and describing the return of Judah from captivity, is believed by many to have been an addition by a later writer.

The ideal of social justice proclaimed by Amos was new. The people believed they were pleasing God by sacrifices on his altars, and that Religious Value thus they were keeping Covenant with him. They were utterly mistaken. Their religion was a sham, an offense to God, 6: 21-23. What he demanded was righteousness, 6: 14, 15, 24. This truth, that God is a God of justice, not for Israel only but for all nations, 9:7, was taken up by Isaiah 1:14-17 and Micah, 6: 6-8 and later prophets. It came from Amos as a revelation from God.

XIV

THREE EIGHTH CENTURY PROPHETS

(Continued)

THE BOOK OF HOSEA

To the northern kingdom, called Israel, belonged the great prophet Elijah, his successor Hosea Elisha, Ahijah, 1 Kings 11:29ff, Micaiah, 1 Kings 22:13ff, and a host of others who had great influence in the nation. But *the only prophet* of that kingdom who has left writings is Hosea. No other prophet of the Old Covenant except Jeremiah has so clearly revealed *through his own experience* the mind of God in his relations with men.

The period of Hosea's ministry was about seven years, from 743 to 736 B. c. The warnings of Amos only a dozen years before had seemed to the joyous worshipers before the image of the gilded bull at Bethel the ravings of a madman, or of a conspirator against the state, Amos 7:10-12. But already the peace and prosperity of Israel were vanishing, her great king Jeroboam was dead, 2 Kings

14: 28, 29, his son assassinated, the nation paying a heavy tribute to Assyria, 2 Kings 15:17-20, and *anarchy was approaching*. The prophecies of doom by the herdsman of Tekoa were being fulfilled.

Hosea's domestic experience is the key to his preaching. He had loved and married a young woman who became unfaithful to him. **The Key** to Hosea's **Preaching** She had three children who, he discovered, were not his own. She left him, and he afterward found her a slave, bought her, and cared for her, not as his wife but in the hope that, through discipline, she might be restored to him in that relation. This most pathetic love story is briefly told in Hos. 1:2-6, 8, 9; 3:1-3.

Hosea came to regard his experience as a preparation designed to fit him to deliver Jehovah's **His** message to apostate Israel. It was, **Message** in his later view, as though Jehovah **Illustrated** had told him to marry Gomer and to give names to her children that proclaimed her shame, 1:2, 4, 6, 9.

Through years of devotion without limit he loved her as her husband, and after she had sunk to the condition of a slave exposed for sale in the open market, he bought her, under the compulsion of his unquenchable love and undertook to restore her to the character and position in which she could again be his wife.

Hosea loved his country as he loved his wife. Its apostasy from Jehovah, its humiliation present and prospective in the hands of its false woovers, Egypt and Assyria, filled him with keenest anguish, 7:8-16; 8:8-14. Its heartless worship of Baal gods seemed to him like the shameful behavior of his wife, 2:2-5, and Ephraim, as the nation was called, could be reclaimed, like Gomer, only by discovering the utter folly of its course, 2:7, through drinking to its dregs the cup of bitter experience. The way of the prodigal son was long and pitiful, 2:8-13. But the prophet had a steadfast faith that it would end at last in the return to the father's house, 2:14-21; 3:4, 5.

As an example of Hosea's passionate indictments, read the charge he hurls at the people, 4:1-5, then at the priests, vs. 6-10, followed by his bitter meditation, vs. 11-14. Then consider the fathomless tenderness of his appeals to the people to repent of their wickedness and return to Jehovah, who is eager to receive them, 6:1-6; 11:1-11; 14:1-8.

Hosea's contribution to our knowledge of God is a new interpretation of *God's Covenant of love* with his children. Amos proclaimed that God is righteous. Hosea proclaimed that God *is love*. Amos preached that the nation would be lost because

His
Message
Applied

A New
Contribu-
tion

it could not return to civic righteousness. Hosea preached that the nation would be saved if the individuals who belonged to it would repent of their sins and obey Jehovah through the love to him that is prompted by knowledge of his character. Hosea interprets that love through the analogies of family life; of the affection of a father for one whom he has chosen to be his child, 11:1-4, and of a husband for one whom he has chosen to be his wife, 2:19, 20. This is a distinctly new contribution, *a foreshadowing of the New Covenant* which Jeremiah later foretold, not according to the Old Covenant, which the fathers broke "although I was a husband unto them, saith Jehovah," Jer. 31:31-34.

The language of Hosea is often obscure and difficult and the book has suffered at the hands of editors. Yet every student who heeds the exhortation to study the book appended by one of these editors, 14:9, will be amply rewarded.

THE BOOK OF MICAH

Isaiah had begun his ministry in Judah while Hosea was preaching in Israel. During the same period with Isaiah, beginning a few
 Micah years later, another prophet, Micah, was *preaching in Judah*. Micah 1:1, compare Isa. 1:1. He *lived in the country*, among the hills

overlooking the plain of Sharon and the Mediterranean sea, 1:1, 14.

His mission was *to proclaim the divine judgment* against both kingdoms, 3:8; 1:5. The first three chapters are prophecies of judgment. Chs. 4, 5 are mainly prophecies of promise, based on a text, 4:1-3 from an older prophecy, also used by Isaiah 2:2-4. Chs. 6, 7 are miscellaneous, containing the fine summary of the essence of religion 6:6-8, and concluding with the noble psalm of penitent Israel, which belongs to the time of the captivity.

The indications are strong that considerable portions of this little book have been contributed by others than Micah and at a later period. But that the impression he made was strong and abiding is evident from the way his prophecies were quoted a century later by the leaders of Judah, Jer. 26:16-19.

XV

THREE SEVENTH CENTURY PROPHETS

**Sixty
Years
without
Prophets** AFTER the death of Hezekiah, 2 Kings 20:21, and the close of the ministries of Isaiah and Micah no great prophet of Jehovah appeared in Judah for more than half a century. Hezekiah, under the guidance of Isaiah, had driven out the old Canaanite forms of worship, 2 Kings 18:3-6.

But his son and successor, Manasseh, who began his reign about 696 B. C., brought back **Idolatry** all the forms of idolatry, including the **Restored** star worship borrowed from Assyria. His long reign was a period of unbroken hostility to the prophetic party, 2 Kings 21:2-9. *Prophets* attempted to preach but they were *silenced* and put to death, 2 Kings 21:10-16; Jer. 2:30.

During this period the Assyrians conquered Egypt and destroyed its capital, Thebes, which **Assyria** was called No-Amon, Nah. 3:8-10. **Master of** Judah, as Assyrian inscriptions show, **Judah** was ruled by Assyria, and according to the Chronicler Manasseh was carried in chains

to Babylon by the king of Assyria, 2 Chron. 33: 11-13.

The spirit and utterance of prophecy, however, were *not wholly suppressed*, 2 Kings 21:10-12.

The Prophetic Party It is probable that during this period of persecution the most impressive sayings of the prophets of the preceding century, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah, were collected, edited and circulated. When Amon succeeded Manasseh, still carrying out his father's policy, and was put to death within two years, it is not difficult to believe that new hopes were kindled in those who sympathized with the prophetic party, though they may not have prompted the deed, 2 Kings 21:19-23. The popular sentiment, at any rate, was against them, and the people put Amon's little son Josiah on the throne, expecting that he would continue to do as his father had done, v. 24.

But Josiah, when he grew to manhood, disappointed his supporters, restored the reforms of his great grandfather Hezekiah with **Prophets again Powerful** greater ability and stronger purpose, and swept away the abominations of the popular religion which for more than sixty years had prevailed in Judah, 2 Kings 23:4-14. It is at this point that we place the first of the three seventh century prophets in the book of the Twelve.

THE BOOK OF ZEPHANIAH

Jeremiah (see ch. x) and Zephaniah appear to have begun their ministry at about the same time, Jer. 1:2; Zeph. 1:1. Zephaniah **The Prophet** was a great great grandson of Hezekiah, 1:1, imbued, as his sermons show, with the spirit of Isaiah, whose words he no doubt had studied. He seems to have sought to serve his royal cousin Josiah as faithfully as Isaiah had served his ancestor.

During the twelve years of Josiah's minority, 2 Kings 22:2, the persecution of the prophets **Religious Conditions** had ceased. But religious conditions in Jerusalem had not much improved. A remnant of Baal remained. The people continued the Assyrian star worship and swore by heathen gods. Some had apostatized, others had never sought to know Jehovah, Zeph. 1:4-6; Jer. 2:11-13. Many who professed faith in Jehovah had no reverence for him, Zeph. 1:12.

Besides the religious conditions in Judah, *two movements* outside of that kingdom must be **The Political Situation** considered in interpreting the prophecies of Zephaniah. One of these was *the decline of Assyria*, the mighty world empire which so long had oppressed Judah. Internal revolts had already weakened it. A life and death struggle with Babylon and Elam

was imminent before it. The other movement was more immediate and alarming. An *invasion of Scythians* from the north had overrun Western Asia, spread consternation through Palestine, and reached the borders of Egypt.

Under these conditions the young preacher sounded his notes of alarm. The *doom* he proclaimed was to be *universal* 1:2, and Zeph-
 aniah's to include Judah and Jerusalem in the
 Message general ruin, 1:2-13. The Scythian
 invasion probably inspired his first message, which closes, 1:14-18, with the famous dirge, *Dies Irae*, now known in all Christian churches. This is a translation of the Latin version by Thomas of Celano.

As the first chapter describes the judgment of "the Great Day of Jehovah" on Judah, the
 The Day second pictures the *effects of that Day*
 of Jehovah *of Judgment*, 2:1, 2, on other nations, Philistia, vs. 4-7, Moab and Ammon, vs. 8-11, Egypt and Assyria, vs. 12-15. It is difficult for us to imagine the effect of this sermon about Assyria upon a people who had inherited awe of that mightiest of the world's nations and who had *suffered untold horrors* from its oppressions, Nah. 2:11, 12.

The third chapter depicts with impassioned phrases the crimes of peoples, princes, prophets and priests in Jerusalem, vs. 1-7. Then follows

a passage, vs. 8-13, promising blessings on those in all nations who serve Jehovah, and on the remnant of Judah. The closing section, vs. 14-20, is a psalm celebrating the return from the captivity, and belongs to a time after the exile. It may have been fitly placed here to celebrate the fulfillment of Zephaniah's prophecies.

THE BOOK OF NAHUM

The long oppression of Judah by Assyria was about to end. Her people had lost their patriotism, which had been smothered by Assyria their prosperity and their vices, Nah. 3:4. Nations that she had ruled were revolting. The army of Media was marching against her. The poet prophet Nahum sang her funeral dirge. Zephaniah had seen the end coming and had pictured it, Zeph. 2:13-15. Nahum sent forth the *wild cry of triumph* as though he were seeing it fall.

Place yourself in the position of the Hebrews who had suffered long from the cruelties of Assyria without the least expectation of deliverance, who now saw her mighty walls tottering to their fall. Ch. 1 is a chant of Jehovah's power, vs. 2-8, a rebuke to those who defy him, vs. 9-11, a promise of deliverance to

his own, vs. 12, 13, a denunciation of Judah's oppressor, v. 14, and an assurance of safety to Judah, v. 15. Chs. 2, 3 are two great poems celebrating in vivid word pictures the siege and fall of Assyria's capital, Nineveh. Their lesson by inference is that God governs his world by moral law, that he is the sure avenger of wrong, and that those who trust him for protection will not be disappointed.

THE BOOK OF HABAKKUK

Assyria had fallen, her proud capital destroyed, but deliverance did not come to Judah. Babylon had taken the place of Assyria as Judah's oppressor. Then arose another prophet, Habakkuk, to ask the great question which still burdens suffering souls, "*Why must the children of God endure the oppression of the wicked?*" Ch. 1:2-4. For answer he has a vision of the Babylonian or Chaldean armies sweeping all before them, vs. 5-11. They seem to the prophet the instrument of Jehovah to punish the oppressors of Judah, v. 12. But the Chaldeans are also wicked. *How*, asks the prophet again, with the perplexity of Job, *can the holy God make use of such wicked instruments to do his will?* vs. 13-17.

To the prophet's anxious inquiry, 2:1, Jehovah's

clear word is heard, that patient waiting will surely be rewarded by the answer sought, Jehovah's vs. 2, 3, and that while the proud oppressor is puffed up with conceit, *the righteous sufferer will be sustained by his faithfulness*, v. 4.

Then follow five taunting riddles, v. 6, against the oppressor whose avarice, vs. 6-8, pride, vs. 9-11, cruel building schemes, vs. 12-14, of Tyranny sensuality, vs. 15-17, and idolatry, vs. 18, 19 have long been crushing the people of God. But Jehovah is still in his temple, v. 20; compare Ps. 2:1-6. The central thought of these woes is that *wronging others is self-destruction*, Prov. 8:36; Eccl. 12:13, 14.

Ch. 3 is a magnificent ode, which belongs in the book of the Psalms. Compare with Ps. 77:16-20. This ode is worthy of most thoughtful consideration. Its great lesson is that because of misfortunes, even most extreme, we ought to exult in *the God of our Salvation*, and that to those who trust in him the paths of discipline are high places along which he leads them in their upward march.

XVI

THREE SIXTH CENTURY PROPHETS

WHEN the sixth century B. C. opened, *Jeremiah* was a powerful preacher in Jerusalem, giving his warning messages to the young king and the queen mother and the people, Jer.13:18-27. The choicest of the citizens of Judah were deported to Babylon in 597 B. C., 2 Kings 24:14-16. A little later Jeremiah wrote letters to them, ch. 29. *Ezekiel* began his ministry in Babylon five years later, Ezek. 1:2, 3. In 586 the temple was burned and all except the poorest of those who remained were carried to Babylon, 2 Kings 25:8-12. As the time drew near for the captives to return, the splendid sayings of the great *prophet of the exile* were uttered, Isa. 40-55.

The separation of the Jews from their own land aroused a new interest in their national history, and their literary records were gathered, revised and edited. In this period we find the beginning of *the Library of the Covenant*, which has become our

Old Testament. In the Book of the Twelve are three collections of documents belonging to the sixth century, which will now be considered.

THE BOOK OF OBADIAH

The shortest book in the Hebrew library is named Obadiah. Of its 21 verses, 2-9 following the title, v. 1, appear to have been
 Its Author taken from a document also quoted by Jeremiah, 49:7-22. Of the author of this book nothing is known.

To appreciate this fierce denunciation of Edom it is necessary to trace the hereditary hatred
 The Jews' between it and Israel. The stories
 Hatred of in Genesis of Esau and Jacob illustrate
 Edom it, Gen. 25:23-26. It is summed up in Mal. 1:2-4. Edom refused to permit the children of Israel to pass through its borders on the way to the promised land, Num. 20:14-21. Balaam prophesied that Judah should possess Edom, her enemy, Num. 24:18, and she did, 1 Sam. 14:47. David almost exterminated the nation, 1 Kings 11:15, 16. Long afterwards, when Edom had revolted against Judah, 2 Kings 8:20, Amaziah smote it and captured its fortress, 2 Kings 14:7. A favorite theme of the prophets was the divine vengeance executed on Edom, Amos 1:11; Isa. 11:14; Jer. 25:12-14; Joel

3:19. Read these passages, and that bitter cry of an exiled Hebrew, Ps. 137, especially v. 7, and you will be prepared to understand the fierce invective of Obadiah.

Locate Edom on the map, on the southern border of Judah. Picture the Edomites in their rocky fastnesses, taunting the people of Jerusalem in the day of their calamity, vs. 11-14, feeling secure themselves, v. 3. Obadiah encouraged his suffering brethren by prophesying the destruction of Edom, vs. 4, 10, 15, 16, and the final restoration of Judah, vs. 17-21. Into the mocking faces the prophet shouted back defiance; the house of Jacob should be a fire and burn up the house of Esau as though it were stubble, and possess the land it had proudly occupied, vs. 18, 19.

THE BOOK OF HAGGAI

When the first company of returning exiles arrived at Jerusalem they gave money to rebuild the temple, Ezra 2:68, 69. They went back for that purpose, Ezra 1:3, 5, 6. They *built an altar* the first year and established *daily offerings*, Ezra 3:1-6. The second year they laid the *foundation of the temple* with great rejoicing, 3:10, 11.

But owing to *interference* from neighboring

peoples, Ezra 4:1-6, and discouragements from *bad harvests* and other disappointments, Hag. 1:2, the *work* was *discontinued* for more than sixteen years, *i.e.*, from the second year of Cyrus, Ezra 1:1, till the second year of Darius, Ezra 4:24.

Then two prophets began to preach a crusade for the rebuilding of the temple, Ez. 5:1. The **Haggai** first was Haggai, who according to tradition was a *young layman*. He certainly was a *man of action and energy*: for his work is summarized in abstracts of four sermons, delivered within four months in one autumn, 1:1; 2:1, 10, 20.

These sermons are all of the same character and have the same aim. The first one was an **His First Sermon** *appeal to the conscience* of rulers and people. Haggai said to them, assembled in Jerusalem at a feast: Cease urging that the time has not yet come to build the temple because of your poverty. You are poor because of your neglect of the object for which you came back to your own country. Get out into the hill country, collect timber and go to work on the temple, 1:3-11. This was probably the substance of several addresses. They *stirred the rulers and people to action*, and within four weeks they were at work, 1:12-15.

The next sermon was a *strong encouragement* to go on with the work because of Jehovah's

Covenant of promise, 2:2-5, because the disturbed condition of all the nations at that time gave them a great opportunity, 2:6-9, and because of the promise that the silver and gold of all nations should be brought to make the temple glorious.

The third sermon represents Haggai, a layman, asking *two questions* of the priests. The substance of the answers was that ceremonial holiness spread more slowly by contact than ceremonial uncleanness, vs. 10-13. The prophet used the answers as an illustration to show the people that their *long and sinful neglect* of their duty to build the temple had spoiled their work and that the time since they began (compare 1:2 with 2:1) was yet too short to prove the good effects of their new purpose, but he assures them that from that day God will bless them.

The last sermon, on the same December day with the other, was an *assurance to the governor* of the colony that the excited movements of the nations threatening to disrupt the Persian empire would result in their overthrow, vs. 20-22, and in *his exaltation* as the chosen ruler representing Jehovah, v. 23. This promise was not fulfilled in the eyes of the world, for four years later Darius quelled all revolts and reëstablished his empire while the temple

of the Jews was yet unfinished. But the prophet had kindled and proclaimed anew the Messianic hope of Israel.

THE BOOK OF ZECHARIAH

Between the second and third sermon of Haggai another voice was heard summoning the people to return to Jehovah. It was the voice of *Zechariah, prophet and priest*, Zech. 1:1; Neh. 12:16. Twenty-seven persons by that name are mentioned in the Old Testament, and all that we know of this one is revealed in the records of his preaching.

His first sermon was based on the *sad experience of the fathers* in not heeding the words of their prophets, and was an *urgent appeal* to the returned exiles to devote themselves to the service of Jehovah, 1:2-6.

Then follows a collection of eight symbolic sermons in apocalyptic language, which may be named as follows: The Red Horse sermon, 1:7-17; The Horns and the Silversmiths, 1:18-21; The Measuring of Jerusalem, 2:1-13; The Dirty Priest Reclothed, 3:1-10; The Golden Candlestick and Bowl, 4:1-14; The Book that had Wings, 5:1-4; The Woman in the Bushel Basket, 5:5-11; The War Chariots of Jehovah, 6:1-8. This series is concluded with

an account of a crown sent from the Jews in Babylon to be placed on the head of the high priest, 6:11, more probably meant for Zerubbabel, v. 12, in token of his exaltation to royal power, as prophesied by Haggai, 2:23.

This prophecy, however, was not fulfilled. The excited political condition of nations in revolt against Persia, Hag. 2:6, 7, 21, 22, was of the Fate soon and unexpectedly changed by Prophecy the successful campaigns of Darius, Zech. 1:11, 15, and with this passage, Zech. 6:15, the house of David disappears from the Old Testament world.

Two years after Zechariah began to preach, 7:1, he delivered a message to a deputation from Bethel, asking if the anniversaries of Later Sermons the burning of the temple, Jer. 52:12-14, and of the murder of Gedaliah, 2 Kings 25:25, should continue to be observed by fasts now that the temple was being rebuilt, 7:1-14. Ch. 8 is a brief summary of ten sermons, each beginning with "Thus saith Jehovah." After 8:23, read Ezra 6:14-22.

The remaining chapters of the book of Zechariah, 9-14, belong to the period of Greek rule over Palestine, two centuries or more after the time of Zechariah.

XVII

THE THREE LATEST PROPHETS

THE preaching of Zechariah was followed by the dedication of the finished temple and a great celebration of the passover, Ezra 6:14-22. Then followed a period of nearly seventy years of which the book of Ezra-Neemiah contains no record. Probably this silence was because nothing occurred during that time which would add anything to the glory of the history of the Jews for later generations or would enlarge their knowledge of God.

THE BOOK OF MALACHI

Some sermons of that unrecorded period have been preserved to be read and reread by the Jews.

The Preaching of the Time It was a time *between two great revivals*. The first, of which Haggai and Zechariah were the chief preachers, resulted in the rebuilding of the temple.

Then came many years of disappointment and depression, followed by the second revival which resulted in the rebuilding of the walls of

Jerusalem under Nehemiah, 6:15, 16, and the solemn adoption of the Law, Neh. chs. 8-10. In this period, previous to the rebuilding of the city walls, we place the book of Malachi and the sermons in Isaiah, chs. 56-62.

Haggai had hoped for the restoration of the Jews to independence through the breaking up of the Persian empire, Hag. 2:21-23. **The Back-ground of Malachi** But the restoration by Darius of the unity of his kingdom and its maintenance by his successors left to the Jews *no prospect of independence, no influence among the nations, no opportunity for deeds of patriotism or self-sacrifice*. Hostile neighboring tribes, of whom Judah in former generations had been masters, vented their spite on the little province. The national character was lowered as time passed. The leaders became selfish, the priests neglected their office, the people grew careless. The more prosperous cheated their poorer neighbors, and many of them married into families of neighboring nations in order to gain greater opportunities for trade. Foreign wives insisted that their husbands should put away their Jewish wives; for polygamy was not regarded as a sin. Thus the purity of the race was threatened and absorption into stronger heathen communities seemed to the prophets impending. This is the background of the book of Malachi.

The book is anonymous. In placing it in the book of the Twelve it received the Hebrew title, **The Unnamed Prophet** Malachi, 3:1, "My Messenger." It is the title of the "angel" who brought to Zechariah the messages of Jehovah, Zech. 1:9, 12, 19, etc.

The sermons are colloquial, being answers to questions spoken or assumed to be spoken by the people addressed, Note 1:2, 7; **The Style** 2:14, 17; 3:7, 8, 13. The first message of Jehovah to Israel 1:1, was "I have loved you." "Prove it," said the people, v. 2. "See what I did to Esau," vs. 3-5. "What return have you made for Jehovah's favor?" is the prophet's question in the name of his God. To the priests' answering question the prophet replies by accusing them of offering to Jehovah worthless sacrifices which they would not dare present to the governor of the province, vs. 7-9. He declared that it would be better to shut the temple than so to disgrace it, v. 10. Gentile nations honor Jehovah and esteem him more highly than you do, vs. 11-14. Compare Luke 13:28, 29.

Ch. 2:1-12 is a scathing indictment of degenerate priests for *breaking the Covenant* which their **Prophetic** ancestor Levi had kept; vs. 14-16 are **Rebukes** a solemn admonition to those husbands who, under persuasion of their foreign wives, have

divorced their Jewish wives. The tears of these wives on Jehovah's altar prevent him from receiving any offering from husbands who have wronged them, v. 14. Ch. 2:17 is a rebuke to pessimists.

Ch. 3:1-6 declares that Jehovah will answer their skepticism by suddenly appearing in his Prophetic temple, cleansing corrupt priests, and Promises pronouncing judgment on those who practise heathen rites, take foreign wives, and deal unjustly with wage earners and foreigners. Compare v. 5 with Zech. 7:8-10. Just payment of temple dues which have been withheld will be rewarded, 3:7-12. The complaints of faithful ones against God, vs. 14, 15, which they often made to one another, he has heard and has made a record of their fidelity, vs. 16, 17. The time will come when they will recognize the advantage of remaining faithful, v. 18, when seemingly prosperous sinners will be consumed at Jehovah's great Day of Judgment, 4:1, and when *the righteous shall have vindication, restoration*, v. 2, and *vengeance*, v. 3. A careful observance of the Laws of Moses will prepare them for the great trial before the coming prophet like Elijah, and deliver them from destruction at the hand of Jehovah, vs. 4-6.

THE BOOK OF JOEL

The Malachi sermons had their effect in the revival which caused the walls of Jerusalem to rise again and the priestly Law to be adopted, Neh. 6:15, 16; 10:28-31. A period of prosperity followed.

But a terrible plague of locusts swept over the whole land, greater than ever had been known, The Locust Plague Joel 1:2-4. Then the prophet Joel arose, describing the plague in vivid apocalyptic language used in late Judaism, 1:5-12, and calling the people together to fast and pray that Jehovah would avert the impending catastrophe, 1:13-20. The description of the advancing army of locusts is most impressive, as the Day of Jehovah. Read carefully 2:1-11.

The pleadings of the people for mercy, 2:12-17, were heard, and the locusts dispersed, vs. 18-20.

Plenty succeeded famine, 2:21-27. The experience was a foretaste of far greater blessings, *the outpouring of the Spirit of God* on all nations, vs. 28-32, for the salvation of the Jews, 3:1, and the punishment of all the nations that have wronged them, 3:2-16. But Jerusalem will be for Jews only, and will prosper evermore as the abode of Jehovah, vs. 18-21.

XVIII

THE THREE LATEST PROPHETS

(Continued)

THE BOOK OF JONAH

THE latest of the prophetic books, at any rate the latest to be considered, is Jonah. To interpret its meaning you need to study the rise of Greece to be a world empire. It is usually called Javan in the Bible, the Hebrew rendering of the Greek word for Ionian. The period to be studied extends from the *entrance of Greece into Palestine* begun by the alliance of the Macedonians with Darius of Persia about the time of the completion of the temple at Jerusalem, 515 B. C. to *the death of Alexander the Great* in 324 B. C. The permanent establishment by him of Greek influence in the East *changed the life and theology* of the Jewish people.

The victories of Alexander brought the two great currents of ancient thought and culture into close contact, the Semitic and the Greek. The Jews who went to Babylon and Persia and those who came in

touch with these peoples in trade and in other ways were broadened in their sympathies for mankind. They were *the Liberal party*. They maintained that all nations were objects of Jehovah's care. Israel's mission was to bring to them the knowledge of God. Their view and spirit were represented by their hymns, of which Psalms 67 and 98 are examples.

But these Liberal Jews were a comparatively small number. The larger conservative or orthodox party *held* tenaciously to the belief *that God had chosen them and them only* as his children. Their hopeless struggles against their conquerors intensified their hatred against foreigners. Examples of their favorite hymns are Psalms 60, 80, 137.

The book of Jonah belongs to this period. Like the book of Daniel an ancient prophet was chosen by the unknown author as its hero.

Its object was to establish the truth that the *love of God* is not exclusively confined to Jews, but is *extended to all mankind*, and that his Covenant is open to them all. This book stands alone in the second library as containing no prophecy other than the unfulfilled prediction of the immediate destruction of Nineveh, 3:4.

The truth it aims to proclaim of the universal

love of God is presented in the form of a story. As a *word picture* in forty-eight verses for that purpose it has a marvelous completeness.

If it were taken as a record of facts its incompleteness would be more marvelous. For no **A Sermon** name is given of the Assyrian king **Story** thus wonderfully converted, 3:6. No results of the conversion of the people of the capital of the world empire appear in its history. Assyria to the end of its existence worshiped its own gods. No parallel is known of a great fast observed by animals clothed in sackcloth, abstaining from food and water and crying to God in repentance for their sins, 3:7, 8. No account is given of what their sins were. The book bears on its face the evidence that it is a sermon story, as truly as was Isaiah's song of the vineyard, Isa. 5:1 ff. and Christ's story of the Prodigal Son, Luke 15:11-32.

The great fish miraculously prepared to swallow the prophet, which after keeping him in its **Not a** stomach three days vomited him out **Record** on an unnamed dry land in obedience **of Facts** to an order from Jehovah, 2:10, the tree that Jehovah made to grow up in a single night to give shade to the prophet watching to see if Nineveh would be destroyed at his word, 4:6, are sufficient evidences that this is not a record of facts.

Secular powers employed by Jehovah to punish disobedient Israel were often described by later prophets as sea monsters. The Pharaoh of Egypt was thus pictured by Ezekiel 29:3-5; 32:2-4. The figure seems to have been taken from an ancient legend, Isa. 27:1. Nebuchadnezzar was the sea monster who had swallowed up captive Judah, Jer. 51:34, and Jehovah would compel him to vomit forth what he had swallowed, Jer. 51:44.

The book of Jonah amplified this figure into a wonderful sermon story. Israel having refused its great mission to offer salvation to the nations, and fleeing from its duty, was cast off by Jehovah, swallowed up in captivity by Babylon, and after a period of discipline was brought forth again by Jehovah's command to Babylon's king, Ezra 1:1-5; Jonah, chapters 1, 2. But Israel, restored to its own land, had failed to appreciate its mission, and narrowed itself in selfishness till it had grown bitter at the thought of God's mercy and loving-kindness toward mankind outside of its own little circle. Repentance for sin and obedience to God manifested among Gentiles, 3:5-10, only irritated the orthodox Jews. They sulkily hoped against hope that their God would show himself as mean as they felt.

But temporary good fortune for the Jews so

absorbed them that they forgot all about the mission of Jehovah which they had misunderstood, 4:6. When they lost their good fortune they continued to forget their mission because of their misery, vs. 7, 8. In prosperity or adversity they regarded themselves as the most important thing in the world. They were like one who assumed to be a prophet of Jehovah and who was made more miserable by losing a shade to keep the hot sun off his head than he was because his curse on a great city of penitent souls had failed to work.

The sermon story leaves the orthodox Jews *so angry* because Nineveh was *not* destroyed, 4:3, 4, *so very angry* because the gourd tree *was* destroyed, so meanly jealous of their God looking down in loving compassion on the vast city with its throngs of penitent faces turned up toward him, and its multitude of innocent children and cattle, vs. 9-11.

In its penetrating appreciation of human nature at its worst and best, its exquisite humor, its noble comprehension of the justice, mercy and love of God as the Father of mankind, and its vision of a redeemed world, the book of Jonah is unsurpassed in the books of the Old Covenant. It *foreshadows the spirit of Jesus*, preaching his

The
Prophetic
Character
of the
Book

first sermon to his own townspeople and rousing to fury the hate of the orthodox Jews of Nazareth, Luke 4:16-30; and the message of Peter to the first Christian church inspired by a new divine impulse to emancipation from narrow Judaism and saying, "Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life."

No true student of the Bible who has comprehended the meaning of this sermon story will wonder that one of the greatest German scholars has said, "I have read the Book of Jonah at least a hundred times, and I will publicly avow that I cannot even now take up this marvelous book, nay, nor even speak of it, without the tears rising to my eyes and my heart beating higher."

PART THREE
THE LAW

I

THE MAKING OF THE LAW

THE Hebrew title of the first Library of the Covenant, the Torah, did not in its earlier use refer to a book. It meant *the living word of Jehovah* in the mouth of his prophets, giving them instruction for men concerning God and their conduct toward him. For example, Isaiah's command to his disciples to bind up and seal the law, Isa. 8:16, referred to his own teaching, prefaced by "Thus saith Jehovah," Isa. 1:10. Before the discovery of the book of Deuteronomy, 621 B. C., 2 Kings 22, 23, the prophets do not mention a book as their source of authority.

The great Lawgiver of Israel was *Moses*. The prophets before the Exile knew him as *the founder of the nation*, the prophet to whom Jehovah revealed the Torah, Hos. 12:13; Mic. 6:4. Centuries after his death it was declared that with no prophet since his time had God spoken so intimately as with him, Deut. 34:10-12. He gave to the people whom he led

out of Egypt *the principles of the Law* whose detailed precepts were wrought out through their experience.

It is not asserted, however, that he wrote the five books known to us by the title *The Law*.

The Writings of Moses Moses wrote the instructions of Jehovah at the organization of the nation before Mt. Sinai, Ex. 24:1-4, which were *the basis of the Covenant*. The Ark, constructed under his direction, which symbolized the immediate presence of God in Israel, contained the "testimony" which Jehovah gave to him, Ex. 25:21. But that was only the two tables of stone on which the ten commandments were written, 1 Kings 8:9. Those were the standard of living acceptable to God, which came as a revelation through Moses. The Law was the development of that standard through ages of national experience.

Three distinct codes of laws can be traced in the books of the Law. The first is known as the **Three Codes of Laws** *Sinaitic Code*, Ex. chs. 20-23. Its center is the ten commandments or Decalogue, and it is adapted to the needs of a primitive agricultural community. It prescribes three feasts, Ex. 23:14-17, and sacrifices may be offered to Jehovah in any place, Ex. 20:24. The second is the *Deuteronomic Code* adopted in Judah more than five centuries later, Deut. chs.

12-26. It names seven feasts, and the public worship of Jehovah is forbidden except in one place, Deut. 12:5-7, 13, 14. The third is the *Priestly Code*, suited to the period following the Exile, Lev. chs. 17-26. The elaborate ritual which here sanctions the detailed laws culminated in the *Day of Atonement*, ch. 16, to which no allusion is made in previous legislation or in the prophetic books, except possibly in Ezekiel.

These three codes are imbedded in five volumes, which assume to give an account of the origin of the people of Israel, of their early history, of the development of their faith in and worship of Jehovah, of their government, social life and relations with other nations.

The books bear evidences of having been written in their present form in a period of maturity centuries later than the political, religious, and social conditions which they describe. Note, *e.g.* Gen. 12:6; Num. 12:3; Deut. 17:14-17; 34:10. They also contain, interwoven together, frequently varied and sometimes contradictory statements of the same events; *e.g.* compare Gen. 1:1-2:4 with 2:4-25; 6:18-22, and 7:6-9 with 7:1-5.

These varied accounts appear in all the five books, indicating that the same methods of con-

structing them have been employed in them all. They are together a continuous history of the life and legislation of primitive Israel. Therefore they are in an important sense a single book, and the Greek name given to them by the Jews was *Pentateuch*, i.e., the book of the five.

The same methods also are discovered in the book of Joshua, which is the complement of the others as describing the final stages in the history of the nation through its settlement in Canaan. Hence modern scholars apply to the six books the name *Hexateuch* to emphasize their unity.

The general outline of these six books considered as one includes, (1) The beginnings of universal history, Gen. chs. 1-11; (2) Biographies of the ancestors of the Hebrews as the Covenant people of Jehovah through the period of the patriarchs, Gen. chs. 12-50; (3) The organization of the Hebrew nation and the beginnings of its institutions and laws, Ex. ch. 1—Num. 10:10; the training in the desert wanderings, and settlement of three tribes in the East Jordan region, Num. 10:11—Deut. 34:12; the conquest of Canaan, Josh. chs. 1-24.

The methods and processes of divine revelation are much grander and more extensive than were formerly supposed. The books of the Law rep-

resent a growth of more than thirty centuries, during which the Spirit of God was answering **The Basis of the Law** the inquiries of men concerning their origin, their relations with him and with one another, their duties and destiny. These inquiries were answered through human experience expressed in songs and stories and records of wars and conquests and duties formulated into laws. Excavations and researches have brought to light inscriptions on rocks, monuments, and temples; and long-buried cities and libraries revealing the history of the nations out of which the people of Israel sprang, their thoughts and deeds and history. In these records are beginnings of the sacred books of the Hebrews written long afterwards.

These rich sources in written records and oral traditions were enlarged by the life of the Hebrews **The Growth of the Law** in Egypt, their emigration to and conquest of Canaan, and their organization into a nation which, after a century as one government under Saul, David and Solomon, separated into two kingdoms. With these sources to draw upon, various persons in each kingdom prepared accounts of their race and nation from the beginning of the world to their own time.

Study again the outline of the beginnings and growth of the historical books of the Old Covenant in Part II, chs. 1 and 2 of this book. Because

of its great importance as a key to the understanding of the first library, this outline is here sketched again.

As in the New Testament there are four gospels, so in the Old there were four narratives of the **The Four** beginnings of Israel. These are now **Narratives** united into one account given in the five books of the Law. (1) *The Judean Narrative*, written in the southern kingdom, is probably the oldest. It began with the story of the creation of man and the origin of sin, Gen. 2:4-3:24, and from these remote beginnings traced the history of the Covenant people of Jehovah to the death of David. (2) *The narrative* written in the northern kingdom, *known as Ephraim*, began with the Covenant of Jehovah with Abraham and extended to the end of the Elisha stories in 2 Kings, ch. 13. *These two narratives* were some time afterwards *combined* into one with omissions, additions, and connecting links.

The book of *Deuteronomy*, originally a restatement and adaptation of the laws of Israel to the **Deute-** conditions of the kingdom of Judah, **ronomy** is enlarged by (3) *a narrative review* of the early experiences of the Hebrew people, based on accounts in Exodus and Numbers, and connecting Deuteronomy with the rest of the Law. The writer's motive, to justify the ways of God with the people with whom he had entered

into Covenant, appears in alterations and adaptations of the narrative in the other books.

(4) The last narrative was by the priests of the Exile who produced the book of Leviticus, adapting the older institutions and regulations of Israel to the new conditions of the people, reëstablishing the temple worship and the civil government at Jerusalem. It began with the account of the Creation, Gen. 1:1-2:4 and continued to the allotment of the land of Canaan to the tribes.

The union of these narratives into one, with various modifications and additions, produced the Law which *before the reformation, about* 400 B. C., was accepted as a sacred record, and was perhaps the work of Ezra and the school of priests and lawyers to which he belonged, Ez. 7:6; Neh. 8:1-3.

For a detailed account of the structure and history of the formation of the Law, see the article Hexateuch by Professor Nourse in the Standard Bible Dictionary. For further study also see Professor Kent's Beginnings of Hebrew History, pp. 3-48.

II

THE BOOK OF GENESIS

THE first book in the library of the Covenant is not the oldest. It contains, however, some of the most ancient materials in the Bible.

The Title Its Hebrew title is the first word of the book, meaning "in the beginning." The name given to it in our English Bibles, Genesis, is taken from the Greek version, and means births, or origins. It may therefore properly be called the Book of Origins.

The compiler who left the book in its present form brought together into one volume or roll ten little books, each having the same title, book of Origins, or generations.

Ten Books

Book I contains "the generations of the heavens and the earth," 2:4-4:26. The preceding verses were added as a preface when the whole book was formed, though 2:4 may at one time have been the opening sentence.

Book II, the book of the generations of Adam, 5:1-6:8.

Book III, The generations of Noah, 6:9-9:29.

Book IV, The generations of the sons of Noah, 10:1-11:9.

Book V, The generations of Shem, 11:10-26.

Book VI, The generations of Terah the father of Abraham, 11:27-25:11.

Book VII, The generations of Ishmael, 25:12-18.

Book VIII, The generations of Isaac, 25:19-35:29.

Book IX, The generations of Esau, 36:1-43.

Book X, The generations of Jacob, 37:2-50:26.

The compiler's purpose is indicated by the arrangement of these books. He traces the history of Israel back to the beginnings of all things. From the beginning of the universe he came down to the beginning of Man. Of the sons of the first man he selected Seth, who took the place of the murdered Abel, 4:25; 5:3-8, and traced one line of his descendants to Noah. Of the sons of Noah he selected Shem, tracing one line down to Terah the father of Abraham; of Abraham's sons he took Isaac and of Isaac's sons Jacob, from whom the nation got its name, *Israel*. The lines of Ishmael and Esau are briefly traced because of the relation of the nations which sprang from them to Israel. While each of Jacob's sons is the head of a tribe, the chief place in the later history of the patriarchs

is given to Joseph, whose son *Ephraim*, Gen. 41:52, gave his name to the northern kingdom, and to *Judah*, by whose name the southern kingdom was called, Isa. 7:9; 11:13; Jer. 31:20, 31.

Another division of the book helpful for its study presents it in two sections. The first is **Primeval** primeval history, chs. 1:1–11:26. The **History** four great events in this section are *The Creation*, chs. 1, 2; *The Fall* and its consequences, chs. 3, 4; *The Flood*, cleansing the world of moral corruption, chs. 6–9, and *The Confusion of Tongues*, causing the dispersion of mankind, chs. 11:1–9. These stories are combinations of different versions and are traceable to Babylonian mythology. Compare, *e.g.* 1:1–2:3 with 2:4–3:24.

The second section is the history of the patriarchs, chs. 11:27–50:26, and includes the biographies of Abraham, 11:27–25:11, Isaac, 25:19–35:29, and Jacob and Joseph, chs. 37–50. These and other heroes of lesser greatness, the heads of tribes, such as the twelve sons of Jacob and the two sons of Joseph, are the ancestors of the Hebrews, and as their stories were retold by prophetic and priestly writers ages after they lived, in periods of mature civilization of the nation, they represent the growth and character of clans and tribes which gradually were merged into the national life.

The value of these narratives is not to be measured by their accuracy as records of facts. *The earliest story* of the creation, *e.g.*, begins with a picture of a dry and barren world watered for

the first time, when man was the first living being created, 2:4-7. After a garden had been planted by Jehovah, v. 8, and tilled by the man, v. 15, till its trees grew and their fruits were ripe, vs. 16, 17, Jehovah created all kinds of animals and the man named them. Last of all he created a woman, vs. 21-23.

But in *the later story*, of the creation which is placed before the other by the final editors, after all other beings were created, 1:24, 25, God (who is called by a different name from that in the earlier story) created man and woman simultaneously, vs. 26, 27.

These stories, however, have great historic value as showing the progress and development of men's knowledge of God and of human society under his guidance. The records of the patriarchs also, embodying traditions handed down in the localities where the ancestral heroes of Israel lived, may be received as representing the deeds and characters of real men, idealized by prophets moved by the Spirit of God, patriots who thus sought to ennoble the generation of

The
Growth
of the
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God

their own nation for whom they wrote and the generations that were to follow.

The prophets and priests who compiled and wrote this book used the stories of the beginnings of things which came down to them from earlier nations and the traditions of their ancestral heroes for a great and holy purpose — *to teach* the Hebrew people *the character of God*, of his Covenant with them, and what he required of them to maintain that Covenant. Sometimes different writers used the same stories to teach different lessons. For example, the story of the creation was used to reveal the sacredness and purity of the marriage relation, 2:24, 25. The story was told in a later age in a different way to emphasize the value and sacredness of the institution of the Sabbath, 2:1-3.

The great truth must be considered also that Israel by its geographical position, its relation to other nations and its history, had a peculiar religious inheritance, appointed for it by its Creator and Protector. Its *prophetic teachers and leaders* took the traditions and records of other nations and infused into them meanings which *interpreted the national experiences* as revelations of the eternal principles on which the Covenant was founded for those who sought to do the will of God.

The first three chapters of Genesis, *e.g.*, reveal

God as the Creator, 1:26, 27, Benefactor, v. 28, Provider, vs. 29, 30, Judge and Sovereign of mankind, 3:9-19. In the ninth chapter he is foreshadowed as the Merciful Father. Here in germ is the revelation in its completeness of the character of our God.

A study of the book will disclose in like manner, through types of human character, through family and tribal experiences and through **The Revelation in Genesis** events in human history the principles of living which are the will of God and their application in individual, social, and national affairs. The student who seeks in the book of Genesis the mind of God will find it, and will not fail to be convinced that God himself has revealed it to him.

III

EXODUS AND NUMBERS

THESE two books form a continuous narrative of the beginnings of the nation of Israel from the bondage in Egypt to their arrival, after their escape and their long wanderings in the wilderness, at the eastern border of the Promised Land. The book of Exodus takes them *from Egypt to Sinai*, the book of Numbers *from Sinai to the Jordan*.

The narrative is interspersed and broken up by the insertion at various points of laws for the government of the people in the wilderness and after their occupation of the land, with instructions for the building and furnishing of the tabernacle, and with regulations for the conduct of public worship.

The final editors of these books have brought together the combined narratives of the southern and northern kingdoms with extensive selections from the priestly narrative, written after the exile. (See the closing paragraphs of ch. 1, Part. III.) To the latter, *e.g.*,

belong the directions concerning the tabernacle, Ex. chs. 25-31, 35-40, the census, arrangements of the camp etc., Num. chs. 1-10:28. From the former are taken the picturesque narrative portions, of which the first five chapters of Exodus, except a very few sentences, and Num. 10:29-12:15 are illustrations.

The combination of these sources causes some statements to seem inconsistent with each other; **Conflicting** *e.g.*, in one sentence the spies are said **Accounts** to have gone the entire length of the promised land, Num. 13:21, and in the following sentences they are represented as having only entered the Southern part and then returned to the camp.

Several beautiful poems are also quoted from books not now in existence, such as the triumph **The** songs of Moses and Miriam, Ex. ch. 15, **Poems** the War prayer in connection with the Ark, Num. 10:35, 36, the Song of the Spring, 21:17, 18, and the poems of Balaam, chs. 23, 24.

There are two sections in Exodus. The first is concerned with the history of the Israelites. **Contents** Chapter 1 describes their bondage in **of the** Egypt, chs. 2:1-7:7 the birth and train- **books** ing of Moses, chs. 7:8-12:36 the plagues and wonders, chs. 12:37-15:21 the departure from Egypt, chs. 15:22-18:27 the journey from the Red

Sea to Sinai. The central event of the book and indeed of the whole history is the *giving of the Law and the Covenant* entered into under the mountain, chs. 19–24.

The second section is mainly the priestly narrative, concerned with *laws and institutions*; instructions for building the tabernacle, consecrating the priests and appointing their duties, and establishing an order of public worship. It includes, however, the account, mostly from the earlier narratives, of the apostasy of the Israelites, their punishment, and the renewal of the Covenant, chs. 32–34.

No book of the Law is so difficult of analysis as Numbers. Its statistical materials and legal regulations, which are taken from the late priestly records and form the largest part of the book, break in upon the narrative here and there, often without apparent connection with it. But it may be loosely divided into four sections.

I. The first section, chs. 1–10, is mainly occupied with a census of the tribes, arrangements of the camp, laws concerning the tabernacle, things clean and unclean, suspected adultery and vows. Compare 10:29–32 with Ex. ch. 18, two versions of the same story. In one of them Moses' father-in-law was named Hobab, in the other Jethro.

II. Chs. 11–20, a narrative of events and

experiences of the Israelites while they were encamped in the neighborhood of Kadesh. Ch. 10:33 might properly be joined to Ex. 34:35, or even to Ex. 24:18, making a continuous story.

III. Chs. 20-27, mainly a collection of exceedingly interesting though not very closely connected events on the march from Kadesh to the east bank of the Jordan, concluding with the appointment of Moses' successor.

IV. Chs. 28-36, a collection of laws and regulations said to have been issued on the plains of Moab, with incidents illustrating these laws and traditions associated with the locality.

These records are based on historic facts. They are of great value as preserving these facts, **Historical Value** and also as presenting their interpretation by Hebrew writers several centuries after the events occurred.

It must be remembered that these books were not written primarily to give a knowledge of **The Purpose** history, but to teach religious truths, illustrating them by selected events of history. Records of these events were selected from different and sometimes variant accounts. For example, according to the narrative of the northern kingdom, God had never revealed himself to the patriarchs by his name Jehovah, which he used for the first time in making himself known to Moses, Ex. 6:2, 3. According to the narrative

of the southern kingdom, Abraham called God by the name Jehovah, Gen. 12:8, and men did so ages before that time, Gen. 4:26.

It should be remembered also that the writers of these books idealized history to adapt it to their religious purpose; *e.g.*, the seductions of the Moabites caused Israel to fall into gross crimes, just after a glorious destiny had been predicted for them, Num. 25:1-15. Because of this Jehovah commanded Moses to punish the Midianites, a tribe of the Moabites, vs. 16-18. Therefore the writer of Numbers describes the annihilation of that tribe as the crowning act of Moses' life, ch. 31. But the description of it measured by our moral standards is repulsive, and it is impossible for us to believe that Jehovah commanded it. Moreover, it could not have occurred as described, for if every male had been killed, 31:17, the Midianites could not in after years have held the Israelites in subjection, Jud. 6:1, 2.

The history they contain is subordinated to their religious purpose. The writers no doubt accepted the records they used as authentic. But they used them as Jesus used parables, because they were sure to interest the people and wonderfully fitted to convey the meaning of the truths from God they

sought to teach. They represented God as the supreme One, who loves righteousness and hates wrong doing; and the supreme object of living, for the nation and the individual, as their coming into and enjoying intimate personal relations with God.

To them the ideal men were those welcomed into such relations with God. Such a man was Moses the Greatest Hero, the dominating personality in these two books and indeed in the entire library of the Law from his birth onward. He is the *ideal hero for all ages*, intensely human in his sympathies with the undisciplined multitude committed to his care; so keenly sensitive to the presence of God that he sees him in the great things of nature in her solitudes, and hears his voice calling him to deliver the people chosen for a great destiny, Ex. 3:1-5.

Follow the course of his life as the servant of Jehovah, the mighty struggle on the banks of the Nile between might and right, where right prevailed because of the courage and faith with which this shepherd of Midian faced the great king of the nation that held his people enslaved, Ex. 5:1-4; 12:31, 32; the steadfast confidence with which he sealed the Covenant between Jehovah and Israel, Ex. 24:-8; the measure of patience with which, through discipline and inter-

The Outline of Moses' Career

cession, he secured the pardon of Jehovah for their falls into heinous ingratitude and inexcusable crimes, Num. 11:1-15; 14:11-19; the prophetic insight rewarded by revelations from God, Ex. 33:12-19, which rises into such royal dignity in intimacy with God that it was remembered in after ages that no other prophet ever arose in Israel like unto Moses, "whom Jehovah knew face to face," "as a man speaketh unto his friend." Deut. 34:10; Ex. 33:11.

Each incident recorded in these books brings out some distinctive trait of a titanic mental and moral character; the facing and quelling of rebellions in the camp instigated by trusted leaders, even his own brother and sister, Num. 12:1-15; 16:41-48; 21:4-9; the calm reception of the repulse of their own kinsmen, the Edomites, Num. 20:14-21; the battles with and victories over the Amorites and other strong nations entrenched in their path to the Promised Land, Num. 21:1-3, 21-25, 33-35; the conquest of the seer called by the king of Moab to curse Israel, Num. chs. [22-24; the recovery from the fall before the temptation to Moabite idolatry, ch. 25; the mighty achievement of organizing a horde of undisciplined slaves into a conquering nation with a system of government controlled by a system of worship, and the resignation with which after forty years of unre-

The
Meaning
of each
Incident

mitting toil he bowed to the will of God and laid down his life, Deut. 34:1-12.

Who can wonder that the nation should have ascribed to Moses the whole system of laws Moses a developed through their experience by Revelation which they were governed in after ages? from God Can any thoughtful person study sympathetically the character and career of the great lawgiver whose influence has been felt increasingly throughout the world down to our own time, and doubt that he and his work were a revelation from God?

IV

THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS

THE book of laws for the use of the priests of the second temple is called Leviticus. Its name, given by Greek-speaking Jews, implies that it describes the functions of the Levites, which is not the case. A better title is that given in the Talmud, *The Law of the Priests*.

Portions of this law are scattered through Exodus and Numbers, between which books

Leviticus is placed in the English Bible.

Its Character It is *a continuation of the legal section of Exodus*. The instructions concerning the making of the tabernacle, Ex. chs. 25-31; 34-39, are followed by directions for setting it up and the initiation of Aaron and his sons into the priesthood, 40:1-16. A description is given of the first service, in which Moses acted as priest, 40:17-35.

The manual of directions to the priests for offering sacrifices immediately follows, Lev. chs.

Its Contents 1-7. Chs. 8, 9, describe the induction

of Aaron and his sons into the priesthood according to the directions in Exodus,

ch. 29, and 40:12-16. The story of the destruction of two of Aaron's sons, Lev. 10:1-8, is next told as an introduction to certain legal prescriptions concerning the provision and food for priests and their families, vs. 9-20.

At this point in the story of Nadab and Abihu is inserted a manual or code of laws concerning ceremonial purity, chs. 11-15. Then the story is continued introducing legislation following the death of the two priests providing for the Day of Atonement, the culmination of the ceremonial code, a fast not elsewhere mentioned in the Hebrew history except in Num. 29:7-11.

Then follows a section called by modern scholars the Law of Holiness, chs. 17-26. After a set of laws concerning vows and offerings connected with the tabernacle, the priestly document is continued to Num. 10:10.

The central idea of the Levitical Law was that all worship acceptable to Jehovah must be offered **Its Central** at the one sanctuary, where he had **Idea** fixed his dwelling place, Lev. 26:11, 12, and had promised to meet with the children of Israel, Ex. 29:42,-45.

Such worship could not be offered by any except priests. They surrounded and guarded the sacred place. Next to them were the Levites, forming a second cordon around it, Num. 1:50-53.

By the Levitical Code an infringement against

a ceremonial law was as wicked as disobedience to any of the ten commandments. The eating by **Emphasis** a priest of the flesh of an animal that on **Ritual** had been torn by beasts was a sin deserving death, Lev. 22:8, 9. If any person offered a peace offering to Jehovah by killing an animal before the sanctuary, Lev. 3:1, 2, and kept any of the flesh till the third day to be eaten, he was to be punished by expulsion from the nation, 19:7, 8.

All violations of the ceremonial law required atonement. The great object of the ritual was **Atonement** to provide this. The only way *atonement* could be made *was by offering sacrifice* by shedding blood, 17:11. Only priests could make atonement for the people, 10:17. If the whole people, or any individual, should break any law, not having known what it was, the priest could make an atonement for him and he would be forgiven, 4:27-31. Only the priests could do the atoning act, and all others must pay them for doing it, Num. 18:8 ff.

This system of worship culminated, according to the ritual, in a *great annual fast*, the Day of **The Day of Atonement**, whose service was elaborately **Atonement** prescribed in ch. 16. The people, the priests, and even the sanctuary itself were to be atoned for in this service, and all were thus purified of their sins, 16: 30-34. There is no

account of the observance of this fast on any occasion in the historical books of the Old Covenant, though the penalty for not observing it was excommunication, 23:26-32. It is mentioned in the New Testament as an established institution, Acts 27:9, and it is now the most solemn day in the year to Jews. Its roots probably reach down into the primitive religion of the ancestors of the Hebrews, and its service was thus carefully wrought out during the exile as the ideal expression of the heinousness and contagion of sin and the necessity of cleansing from it in order to communion with God.

The Law of Holiness, chs. 17-26, mingles together *ceremonial and ethical precepts*. It commands men to be of the same nature as Holiness Jehovah, 19:2. It enjoins reverence for parents, v. 3, kindness to the poor and to foreigners, vs. 9, 10, 33, 34, honesty, vs. 11, 36, love for neighbors, v. 18, honor for the aged, v. 32. It also forbids eating blood, v. 26, mixing seeds and clothes, v. 19, certain ways of trimming the hair and beard, v. 27, and makes no distinction between the two kinds of right doing.

In the main this entire collection of laws is *concerned with public worship* in connection with the Hebrew sanctuary. There are evidences that they have passed through various modifications and changes adapting them to the conditions of the people in dif-

ferent periods extending over several hundred years. Their beginnings were in the Covenant code promulgated in the time of Moses, about 1200 B. C., Ex. chs. 20-23, 34. They have closer relations with the code adopted in the times of Josiah, about 621 B. C., given in the book of Deuteronomy. In its present form the book of Leviticus was probably put forth by Ezra about 454 B. C.

Its ceremonial laws emphasized the separate-ness of the Hebrews from other nations. They appear to have been necessary at the time they were adopted, to preserve the Jews and their religion from being absorbed in other nations. But the Levitical system has long since passed away. Its meaning has emerged into nobler forms of expression. Its requirements of the mediation of priests have ceased to have force, 1 Tim. 2:5, 6. The practice of justice, mercy and moral obedience which the Levitical Law insisted on has become the Christian law with nobler sanctions. As recording a stage of development of the religion of Israel, the book has much historic interest for the student. It has its place in the progress of divine revelation. But its commands in respect to worship are not addressed to the Christian conscience.

V

DEUTERONOMY

THE book of *greatest influence* in all Hebrew history was the one placed last in the Law Library.

Its Position in the Old Covenant It *antedates* all the others in that collection. It was probably the first book, if we except the document containing the Decalogue in Exodus, to be recognized as having sacred authority, 4:1, 2.

Its name in the English Bible is a translation of the Greek title which signifies *a duplicate* copy,

Its Title 17:18, or more probably a restatement of the legislation recorded in the preceding books. It has been called "The Gospel of the Old Testament." Not all modern scholars are agreed, however, that its influence over Israel was wholly beneficial.

Read 2 Kings 22:8-23:25. It is generally acknowledged that the book thus described as

Its History having been found in the temple during the reign of Josiah, 621 B. C., was in substance Deuteronomy. The chief reason is that the reforms introduced by Josiah, which

created a religious revolution in Judah, were precisely those called for in this book.

It consists mainly of *four addresses* and *two poems*, all attributed to Moses. The brief introductory words, 1:1-5, explain that these addresses and poems were uttered to the people on a certain day near the close of his life in a deep valley east of the Dead Sea.

Chs. 1:6-4:40 are presented as the first address by Moses to the people. It is a *review of Israel's The First experiences* during the Wanderings in the Wilderness and an exhortation to whole-hearted loyalty to Jehovah.

After a second brief explanation of the place where the addresses were made, 4:44-49, the second address is given, chs. 5-26. It consists of two portions. The first begins with the statement of the principles on which the relations of Jehovah, the one supreme God, with his chosen people rest, and follows with instructions to teach his law to their children, to obey that law and to make no compromise with the worship of the Canaanites.

The Book of the Covenant The second portion, chs. 12-26, is a rehearsal of specific laws affecting the religious, civil, and social life of the Hebrews. This portion was in all probability the book which Hilkiyah found in the temple.

Ch. 27 includes instructions delivered by Moses

and the Elders for writing the Law on stones, vs. 1-8, and by Moses and the priests for its ratification by the people, v. 9. Then follow directions for the utterance by the Levites of curses on the disobedient, vs. 11-24. This chapter is a preface to the third address on the consequences of obeying and disobeying the statutes and commandments of the Book of the Covenant, ch. 28. By some scholars, however, this chapter is regarded as a conclusion to the section, chs. 5-26.

The final address, chs. 29, 30, is entitled The Covenant in the land of Moab, 29:1. It concludes with brief farewell words, 31:1-8, instructions for the preserving and public reading of the law, vs. 9-13, 24-29, and the commission of Joshua as the successor of Moses, vs. 14-18, 23.

An introduction to the first of two songs is given in vs. 19-22, 30. The song 32:1-43 celebrates the faithful love of Jehovah to his people notwithstanding their ingratitude. Then follows another poem, described as the Last Words of Moses, which exalts ideally the twelve tribes and glorifies the nation as saved and protected by Jehovah, 33:2-29.

The main object of the book was the reorganization of public worship by centralizing it at Jerusalem, 12:5-14. At all events that was the way

King Josiah understood it, for he not only cleansed the temple of all objects of alien worship, but **Its** he destroyed all the local sanctuaries **Purpose** in the kingdom and took their priests away from them, 2 Kings, 23:8. In the territory of the northern kingdom he not only destroyed the famous sanctuary erected by Jeroboam at Bethel, but likewise all the local sanctuaries throughout the country, killing their priests and sacrificing them on their own altars, 2 Kings, 23:15, 19, 20.

If every church in this land were suddenly ordered by the government to be closed, and **A Religious** public worship restricted by law to a **Revolution** cathedral at the national capital, while all the priests and ministers were removed from the communities where they were serving, the situation would be in some sense parallel to that of the reformation in Judah based on the newly found book of the Law.

The consequences of this reformation were manifold. By the earlier law which had existed for centuries, a sanctuary acceptable to **Results** Jehovah could be erected in any place, **of the** Ex. 20:24. By the law in the newly **Adoption** discovered book public worship was **of this** acceptable to him in one place only, **Law** the temple in Jerusalem, Deut. 12:13, 14. According to ancient custom the passover had been

celebrated in the homes as a family festival, Ex. 12:21-27. By the new law the passover could be celebrated only in Jerusalem as a national festival, Deut. 16:5, 6. In earlier times the priests of the local sanctuaries acted as judges of local courts. One central tribunal now took the place of all these, Deut. 17:8-11. Formerly men threatened with the vengeance of others had fled for protection to village altars, Ex. 21:14. Now three cities had to be set apart to take the place of the destroyed altars, Deut. 19:1-3.

The reformation in Judah brought about by Deuteronomy was effective for the time, but it came too late to save the nation, **Ruling** 2 Kings 23:24-27. However its permanent results were immeasurable. It emphasized as never before the unity and supremacy of Jehovah. Its motto might appropriately be "One sanctuary, one God." It taught that idolatry was the chief of sins, 6:14, 15; 17:2-5. It tended strongly to separate the Hebrews from other nations, 7:1-3. Deuteronomy exalted the unselfish love of Jehovah for his chosen people without any desert of theirs, 7:6-10; 9:4, 5. The only response for this love acceptable to him is the same kind of love in return, 6:4-9. This love to Jehovah prompts like love to one's neighbors, 22:1-4 and to all creatures he has made, vs. 6, 7. It was from Deuteronomy that Jesus summarized

the whole of the Old Covenant in two sentences, Matt. 22:37-40.

This book contains laws almost identical with those on the recently discovered tablet of king Hammurabi, who ruled from the Mediterranean Sea to the Persian gulf a thousand years before Moses. It reproduces nearly every commandment of the Covenant Code in Ex. chs. 20-23, reshaping the teachings so as to adapt them to centralized worship instead of at the local altars. It shows also a distinct advance in revealing Jehovah as the God of all nations and his will as the moral law for all mankind.

The fundamental principles of Deuteronomy are those which Moses taught as recorded in Exodus and Numbers. In accordance with ancient custom it is not strange that the author of the book should put the very words of its teaching into the mouth of Moses. But it is hardly conceivable that its chief message, the centralization of worship at Jerusalem, should have been taught by Moses and not known or not regarded by any of the prophets or kings of Israel or Judah for hundreds of years after the temple was built. See *e.g.* 1 Chron. 16:39, 40; 1 Kings, 3:4; 18:30-32; 19:10, 14. The author of Deuteronomy in its present form is unknown.

The account of the finding of the book, 2 Kings

ch. 22, gives no hint of the time when it was written. But the history of Hezekiah and his attempted reforms and of the terrible reaction during the long reign of Manasseh strongly suggests that the code, ch. 12-26, was prepared during that period by men who remained faithful to Jehovah. Some of the other portions carry convincing evidences of having been added later.

The author or authors of Deuteronomy have left marks of their editing on most of the other historical books. They have edited the book of Kings so as to condemn the rulers of Israel and Judah for worshipping at the local sanctuaries, and to account for the destruction of both kingdoms as a punishment for apostatizing from the worship of Jehovah at Jerusalem only, 2 Kings 17:7-18; 23:26, 27.

The publication of the Deuteronomic code was an attempt to present in a practical program the teachings of Isaiah and the other earlier prophets. It resulted in the reform of the worship of Jehovah which had become corrupt, in translating aspirations after great religious ideals into statutes and commandments fitted to realize them, and in making the essence of religion the basis of morality and of society. Its ideal is a holy nation governed by divinely appointed priests according to the will of God.

VI

THE LIBRARY OF THE COVENANT COMPLETED

THE thirty-nine books of the Library of the Old Covenant have been examined in the preceding chapters. The oldest bears the title Amos, who preached about 750 B. C. The latest is the book of Daniel, written about 165 B. C. The making of this library, from the writing of the first book till the reception of the last one into the latest collection, extends over *about 600 years*. Measure that time by the records of the history of English speaking peoples from about two centuries before the discovery by Columbus of the New World to the present time. Consider the great events that have occurred, the progress made in knowledge of all sorts, in inventions, in government, in the social relations of mankind in six hundred years. Remember that such a progress must in some measure be reflected in the successive books of this wonderful library.

Many of these books include materials pro-

duced much earlier than they. We have traced some of these materials back almost to the beginning of human history. We have found them in traditions handed down through many generations from nations old in civilization and religion before the Hebrews existed. This library, then, represents the *history* of the relations between God and mankind *through more than thirty centuries*, the progress of knowledge of him through stages of revelation of his will and character in the aspirations and experiences of men in many lands and successive ages.

No other ancient collection of books compares with this in the time it covers, the peoples it represents, the themes with which it deals, and its ever increasing influence on human society. And the controlling fact and purpose of this library is *the Covenant* entered into and maintained between God and a people chosen to be his, Ex. 6:2-4; 19:5, 6; Ps. 89:33, 34; Isa. 55:3; 59:20, 21.

We have traced back the history of the library from the time of its completion, Part I, ch. 12, to the writing of the books composing it and to the documents used in making these books. We note now the *distinctive stages* that are known in making the library and elevating it to the position of *the Holy Scriptures of the Covenant*.

No evidence has been found of the existence of this library till after the captivity, which dates The First back to 586 B. C. A brief compendium Stage of laws was committed to writing by Moses, Ex. 24:4. *The Ten Words*, as they were called, Ex. 34:27, 28, were placed in the Ark of the Covenant. Nothing else was in the ark when it was placed in the first temple, 1 Kings 8:9.

A larger collection, found several centuries later — the laws in the book of Deuteronomy — The was adopted by the king and people of Second Judah as *the book of the Covenant*, Stage 2 Kings 23:2, 3. But no collection of sacred books as yet appears.

Nearly two centuries later Ezra, "the ready scribe in the Law of Moses," Ez. 7:6, came from The Babylon to the restored Jerusalem. Third There is reason to believe that during Stage the captivity the *records of the laws and history* of the nation had been carefully gathered. He carried with him a copy of the Law, Ez. 7:10, 14.

A few years later Ezra brought the book of the Law of Moses and read from it to the people and explained its meaning, Neh. 8:1-8. The Earliest This book, it is reasonably certain, was Library in substance *the Pentateuch*, the first Sacred library.

The popular acceptance of the books as having divine authority was much encouraged by the habit, inaugurated by Ezra and his associates, of reading them publicly on Sabbaths and other festival seasons in the synagogues. The date of the acceptance of "The Law" as a sacred library is approximately 444 B. C.

The first collection of sacred books in liturgical reading came comparatively early to be felt as incomplete. From early times prophets had taught and interpreted the Law, when it was mostly oral tradition. Now that it had crystalized into a library the office of the prophet declined. But many of the prophetic books were in existence before the first library was elevated to the position of sacred authority. The sayings of the prophets were referred to during the captivity as the Word of Jehovah, Ezek. 38:17.

The complete collection of the books which form the second library could hardly have been made earlier than 300 B. C. It did not include the book of Daniel which was esteemed as prophecy in the time of Christ, Matt. 24:15, and which was written about 165 B. C. The prologue to the apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus written about 132 B. C. mentions "the Prophets" as the second of the

three collections of the Hebrew Scriptures. It is probable then, that as early as *the middle of the third century* B. C. lessons from the Prophets were added to those of the Law in the public readings of the synagogues, Luke 4:17, Acts 13:15, 27. They were not for some time, however, regarded as of equal authority with the Law, but were read to supplement or illustrate it.

The completion of the third collection, "the **The Writings,**" and of the whole Hebrew **Writings** Scriptures as one library, is explained **Adopted** in the closing paragraphs of Chapter 12, Part I.

The deepest impression made by a survey of the library of the Old Covenant is that of the **The Old continuing growth** among men of the **Covenant knowledge** of God and of His require-
Incompletements of them, of the conception of man as the creation and offspring of God, and of the sense of social obligation, of the duties of all men to their fellow-men as children of One Father. The impression also grows during this study of the incompleteness of the library of the Old Covenant as a revelation of the character and will of God. It was *preparing* the way for the great revelation of *the New Covenant* to be made through His Son Jesus, the Messiah, Heb. 1:1-4.

This knowledge of God has always been possessed by men, though in different degrees. The

revelation in the books, in order to be apprehended, requires the *continuing* and illuminating *presence* in the student of *the Spirit of God* which inspired their authors. This progress in the knowledge of God is in our time greater than ever before. Long buried treasures uncovered yield light on the sacred pages. Reverent research, and even study not prompted by faith in God, are adding to the clearness of men's visions of him in his world and Word. The revelation of God to mankind is in its nature continuous. He is *the living God ever speaking to living men*, Matt. 22:32.

As we trace the beginnings and growth of this library of the Covenant, then, we may reasonably expect to find not only treasures old but also those that will be new, as yet undiscovered, Matt. 13:51, 52. We shall therefore best fulfill the purpose of this study by appropriating for ourselves out of the Old Covenant the prayer:

**"Open Thou mine eyes that I may behold
Wondrous things out of Thy Law;"**

and out of the New Covenant the promise of the Son of God:

**The Spirit of Truth . . . shall guide you into
all the Truth."**

BOOKS FOR REFERENCE

DICTIONARIES. The best equipment of the average student in pursuing the study of the subject of this book is Funk & Wagnall's *A Standard Bible Dictionary*, or *Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible* in one volume. Taken together one volume often supplements the other.

HISTORIES. Prof. Charles Foster Kent of Yale University has made contributions of great value to the modern study of the Bible. His *Historical Series for Bible Students* is in four volumes, the last volume written by Prof. J. S. Riggs. Ottley's *Short History of the Hebrews* and Cornill's *History of the People of Israel* are valuable compendiums. Kent's *Historical Bible* in six volumes is intended for Bible class use with appendices of general questions and subjects for special research.

COMMENTARIES. *The Messages of the Bible*, a series, of which seven volumes are on the Old Testament, presents in paraphrases the religious messages of the books as they are interpreted by modern scholarship. Kent's *Student's Old Testament*, six volumes, undertakes to rearrange the writings in their logical order, by means of critical analysis, to indicate their dates and authorship so far as known, and to offer a clear translation with inter-

pretative notes. *The Cambridge Bible for Scholars* is on the whole an excellent series of short commentaries on individual books. In the series entitled *The Bible for Home and School*, the volume on Isaiah by Prof. J. E. MacFadyen especially deserves mention, while Prof. George Adam Smith's Isaiah (2 volumes) and The Twelve (2 volumes) in *The Expositor's Bible* are of unusual excellence.

INTRODUCTIONS TO THE OLD TESTAMENT. MacFadyen, Cornill, and Driver have written volumes of profound learning and insight.

GENERAL. Robertson Smith's *Old Testament in the Jewish Church* and *Prophets of Israel*, Kent's *Origin and Permanent Value of the Old Testament*, R. G. Moulton's *Literary Study of the Bible*, and Ryle's *Canon of the Old Testament* are very valuable.

More extended lists of books on biblical and related subjects will be found in several of the volumes above named. The number is large and constantly increasing. I have mentioned only some of those I have used in preparing these chapters, which seem to me serviceable for untechnical students.

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